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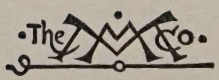

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SOME OUTLINES OF

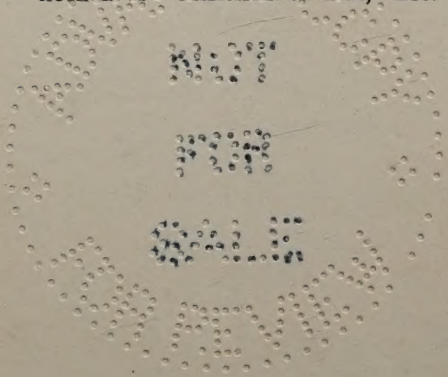
THE RELIGION OF EXPERIENCE

A BOOK FOR LAYMEN AND THE UNCHURCHED

BY

HORACE J. BRIDGES

AUTHOR OF "CRITICISMS OF LIFE," ETC.



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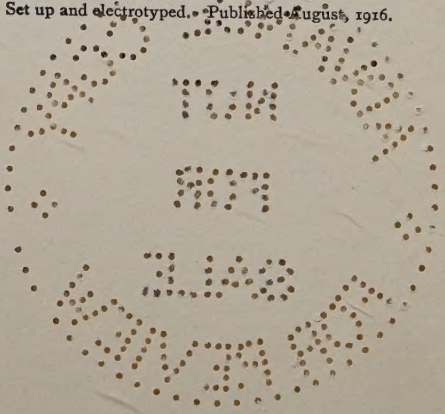

TO
THE MEMORY
OF
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INTRODUCTION

THE period through which we are passing has been characterized with great accuracy and felicity by Mr. Walter Lippmann as one of simultaneous drift and mastery: mastery of detail, combined with drift in the matter of the paramount interests of life and its direction as a whole. In no way is this state of things more clearly demonstrated than by the contrast between our great and constant advances in scientific knowledge and the control of the world's material resources, and the ever-increasing confusion, obscurity and uncertainty in the domain of morals and religion. We know more about the trees than our forebears, and can handle them with unprecedented skill; but of the dimensions of the wood, and of the chances of finding a path through it, we do not know. Indeed, we are tempted to despair of the possibility of knowing. Our impulse is towards agreeing with Auguste Comte in his assertion that metaphysical inquiry is vain, and that we must deliberately limit ourselves to the field of the phenomenal, in which "positive" knowledge and "positive" results are obtainable.

And yet the soul of man refuses to acquiesce permanently in such a proposal. We cannot remain satisfied with building a roof to our house and calling it the sky. Moreover, a little attention convinces us that we cannot attain to mastery in those departments of life where to-day we are adrift, unless we can discover some sovereign principle whereby to co-ordinate our activities and to orient them towards goals which shall command our

spontaneous and rational loyalty. Such a principle is not to be found in the phenomenal world. The Positivist maxims of Love, Order and Progress, of devotion to Family, Country and Humanity, are not self-justifying to the post-Nietzschean age, if they ever were before; nor can they be vindicated without overstepping the limit which Comte arbitrarily prescribed to investigation. Agnosticism is, no doubt, a right and wise attitude in regard to many questions, but agnosticism as to the question of the worth of life, as to the essential difference between right and wrong, or as to the qualities of character which men should strive to develop in themselves, is a fatal disease, paralyzing to the will, and involving ultimately the suicide of the mind. Now the scientific attitude, with its equal and impartial interest in all facts, is bound to be agnostic on these issues, where the supreme interests of life demand clear and confident conviction.

We need, then, something in the nature of a religious faith upon which we can all agree. Yet the bare statement of this as a desideratum is calculated to excite ironical laughter. What is easier than to point to the endless differences even among that minority which still adheres to the various organized forms of religion, or to remind us that a large majority has turned its back upon them all? To hope for a time when the existing Churches shall have composed their differences and arrived at unity of faith and polity seems utopian. In so far as various Churches are co-operating in philanthropic and social work, they are doing so only after carefully stipulating not to discuss the vital principles which inspire them. Moreover, even if we could anticipate that within the next twenty or thirty years the Protestant sects will attain to unity among themselves, what hope

would this give us of bridging the gulf that divides Protestants from Catholics, and both from Jews and free thinkers? Yet what we need is a principle which shall bind together *all* the members of the nation, and, in time, all the nations of the earth.

Our only hope seems to lie in discovering some fresh standpoint from which the doctrines and disciplines of all faiths may be seen in a new light and re-valued. This I have attempted to do by raising the question of the sociological function of religion. My first inquiry is not as to the truth of the creeds, but as to their reason for existence. What are those needs which have urged men into religious fellowships, and induced them to elaborate the various inadequate philosophies called theologies, and the numerous systems of worship, prayer and sacrament? Can these needs be isolated and studied apart from the attempts made to satisfy them? If so, may it not be possible to discover means of meeting them upon which there could be the same kind of practical agreement as there is in regard to the findings of physical science?

In seeking to answer these questions, I have availed myself in this volume of the luminous and helpful method of the psychological students of religion. This is the method of distinguishing between experience and its theoretical interpretation. I have ventured to assume that the creeds and doctrines of all the Churches are attempts to precipitate into conceptual form certain experiences of the human spirit, certain demands which it makes upon the universe, and the response of the universe to those demands. Now since the creeds are unverifiable (because their propositions cannot be subjected to experimental investigation), it seemed necessary

to turn direct to the experience out of which they grew. Moreover, it seems probable that the study of the disciplinary practices of the Churches,—their sacramental and other devices for placing the individual in contact with the sources of spiritual strength,—will bring us directly into the presence of those needs in response to which organized religion has functioned.

This book is thus an attempt to bring to light some of the verifiable factors in religion. Its suggestion is that the Churches should concentrate exclusively upon these. To those who are accustomed to find mental rest and satisfaction in the detailed creeds of the older Churches, such a suggestion may sound chilling and disenchanting in the extreme. It will not do, however, to make the wilfulness of a pampered appetite our guide when truth and the other sovereign interests of mankind are at stake. No doubt it might have been possible, in the days of the infancy of science, to construct a much grander and more fascinating view of the universe than was then verifiable, if wilfulness and imagination had been substituted for the slow and plodding method of investigation and experiment. Not only, however, would such an unreal world have been fruitless, but it would also have constituted a most effectual and permanent barrier to the attainment of that truth, transcending in grandeur all possible imaginary constructions, which the slower method has gradually won.

Now, theologies elaborated in the days of alchemy and astrology, and by the same *a priori* methods as those employed by the alchemist and the astrologer, must needs bear to the undiscovered truth such a relation as alchemy and astrology bear to chemistry and astronomy. And just as, in the process of converting those

romances into our sciences, the first step was to cast overboard all mere speculation and guesswork, and to concentrate upon the tiny fragments of assured truth, so to-day we must begin by denying ourselves the luxury of indulgence in that which is unverifiable. We now stand in religion where the fifteenth century stood in physical science. We are only at the stage of beginning to invent the new instruments and to devise the new methods of inquiry by which we may at last attain to as full a body of ascertained truth in religion as we have won in our knowledge of the physical world.

It is because of an intense conviction that religion is suffering through our failure to recognize the need of new methods and instruments, that I have in these pages given so large a place to the question of intellectual honesty, and of that kind of sincerity which consists in the rigorous separation of what is known from what is merely assumed. Hence my assertion of the claim of Socrates to rank beside Jesus Christ as a Saviour of the world, in the conviction that his method and secret are not only an integral part of any true religion, but a part which, under present circumstances, needs emphasis more than any other factor.

This book, I am aware, can scarcely justify its title. The subject of the Religion of Experience is too vast for adequate treatment within the limits I have imposed upon myself. I am in the dilemma remarked by Seeley in the Preface to his *Natural Religion:* "An author has always to decide whether he will write *short* or *long;* and it is a choice of evils. If he writes long the public will decline to read him; if he writes short they will misunderstand him." My only possible justification is that this book, like several others of recent date, may

supply hints and suggestions which, if worked out by a multitude of other thinkers, will at last lead to the elaboration of the new philosophy, psychology and sociology of religion. I am chiefly anxious that the book shall be recognized as an essay towards a basis of peace and cooperation. The day of the warfare between the provisional hypotheses of science and the speculations of theology (which was mistaken for a warfare between science and religion) is over. The time has come to seek peace upon the only possible worthy basis: that of the acceptance of principles recognized as valid by both belligerents, and the application of those principles to the task of achieving human salvation, by giving to the whole of life a spiritual interpretation and a spiritual orientation that will call forth a devotion at once rational and enthusiastic.

My hope is that this volume may secure the attention of laymen of all denominations, and of those who are not members of any religious organization. To experts in theology and philosophy I fear I have little to offer that is profound enough to merit their consideration. The salvation of religion, however, must come, in my judgment, from the laity, and from those clergy who, by the multiplicity of their tasks, are prevented from becoming specialists in its ultimate problems. Both the clergy and the unchurched laity may, indeed, be weary of the theme. I can but hope that there may be in these pages enough freshness of treatment and suggestion of points of view which have not hitherto been emphasized, to engage their interest. My desire is to set their minds working in fresh directions, rather than to convert them to agreement with my own views on points of detail.

As my colleagues in the Chicago Ethical Society have

generously undertaken the distribution of a number of copies of this book, it is due to them to state that these pages contain a frank expression of my own convictions, the censure of which must fall exclusively upon myself. The Ethical Movement is one in which the members are challenged to do their own thinking. The leaders are neither expected to supply a body of dogmas to their congregations nor to submit their own minds to collective coercion. Hence the distribution of this work by my colleagues does not commit them to acceptance of the more debatable positions it sets forth.

My obligations are too extensive for detailed specification. It is this fact, and not any deficiency of gratitude, which deters me from mentioning names here. I cannot, however, deny myself the pleasure of thanking my friend Mr. Arthur Little Hamilton for his constant help and encouragement, and in particular for his practical assistance in reading and criticizing this volume in manuscript and proof.

H. J. B.

Chicago, June, 1916.

SOME OUTLINES OF
THE RELIGION OF EXPERIENCE

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CHAPTER I

THE POSITION AND OUTLOOK OF THE CHURCHES

THERE is in many minds a conviction that the day of the Churches is drawing to a close. This is not merely an idea entertained by unsympathetic critics in whom the wish is father to the thought. It is the despairing belief of many who, by antecedents and even by ordination, are identified with the historical tradition and the spiritual mission of the Christian fellowships. Recent periodicals have been full of the question, Has the Church collapsed? and most of the answers, even by ministers or ex-ministers, have inclined towards the affirmative. In many of the Churches the leaders are no longer leading; they have lost the sense of their distinctive task and function. They are groping in a twilight of intellectual and spiritual uncertainty. Their whole tone is "timid and apologetic," as of men who are uncomfortably doubtful whether they are rendering a service commensurate with their emolument.

This misgiving in some cases has taken a very positive shape. Papers have appeared affirming that the Christian Church is in a state of complete apostasy from the spirit and teaching of its founders, and implying that sincere men should come out of her, lest they become partakers of her plagues. In this sense recently the

Rev. Elvet Lewis (formerly the coadjutor in London of Mr. R. J. Campbell) expressed himself in the *Atlantic Monthly*. He has abandoned his own pastorate, and apparently despairs of any kind of religious organization possible under existing circumstances.

The *Century Magazine* for February, 1915, contained a paper by Dr. Edwin Davies Schoonmaker, on the question "Has The Church Collapsed?" The burden of his plaint is that the Christian ecclesia has been false to its mission and purpose, from the very first day that its doctrine and organization began to crystallize into definite shape in the minds of SS. Paul and Peter. Dr. Schoonmaker's indignation is awakened by the fact that the bombardment of Rheims Cathedral was resented by the world on æsthetic grounds alone. To his mind the majestic beauty of the medieval shrines is itself a thing to be deplored. The cathedral, he thinks, is not the home, but the tomb of the spirit of Christ. It expresses not the triumph of the Church, but the victory of the world over the Church. His argument implies that Christianity ought always to have remained, what it was in the lifetime of Jesus, a direct spiritual influence of individuals upon individuals, without doctrine or organization, without hierarchy, and without pecuniary endowment. For him the apostasy began with SS. Paul and Peter, the former of whom—so it is implied—turned the religion of love into a system of unprofitable dogma, while the latter transformed it into a temporal power, destined subsequently to enslave the minds and souls of men.

One cannot but feel the earnestness of purpose which these criticisms express, and it would be wrong not to salute with respect the spirit of Dr. Schoonmaker and

Mr. Lewis. But their reasoning proceeds upon presuppositions which are not congruous with the poor world of actual experience. Organization and intellectual formulation are, by the structure of our minds and the nature of our circumstances, inevitable concomitants, indispensable instruments of every spiritual movement. St. Paul's theology may be as false as you please; and it may be not wholly unjust to blame St. Peter for all the sins and shortcomings of the Roman hierarchy. Yet the patent fact is that, without their work and teaching, the very name of Jesus would have perished in the bogs and sands of oblivion, and to evil and to good been lost for ever. The anarchistic ideas of the critics,—their visions of a sweet and lovely spiritual influence, diffusing and perpetuating itself without any worldly organization or philosophical expression,—are dreams indeed: "dreams out of the ivory gate, and visions before midnight." They owe to the organization and the theology which they condemn, the preservation of that very standard of Christian inwardness by reference to which they condemn them. Without the theology and the missionary labours of St. Paul there never would have arisen those groups of people who demanded information about the life and work of their Lord; and consequently the Gospels would never have been written. Nor, without the development which led to the establishment of Christianity by Constantine, is it conceivable that the Christian fellowship could have survived the avalanche which destroyed the proud fabric of Roman civilization. How, then, can one condemn unreservedly an institution which, amid whatever tyranny and corruption, has preserved the standard by which its own shortcomings are to be judged, and has communicated to Mr. Lewis and

Dr. Schoonmaker that very impulse of unworldly idealism which breathes in their writings?

The Church, to be sure, is corrupt. There is no single branch of it, from the Roman to the Quaker, which is not obnoxious to this censure. But to say this is only to say that the Church is a human institution. If one is so obsessed with transcendentalism that one forgets what complications must needs ensue when the white radiance of eternity is refracted through the atmosphere of the time-world, one may say that the presence of even the slightest degree of corruption must condemn the Church beyond reprieve. But the man who keeps his feet upon the solid earth of the actual, even while he lifts his head among the stars of the ideal, will regard the presence of corruption as a reason not for condemnation, but only for reformation.

It will not do to compare the actual historic Church with some perfect pattern laid up in the clear heavens of the ideal. The only fair comparison is between the Church and other human institutions, all of which in truth must finally be judged as sacramental vehicles of the ideal, media of inward and spiritual graces to mankind. Has the Church been more corrupt relatively than the State, the family, and the school? Have popes and bishops, priests and deacons, been more traitorous to their trust than kings and statesmen? Has the Church done proportionately less good and more harm than so-called secular governments? Granted that among its evil it has done some good, could that good have been better done in its absence?

Those who feel that Christianity has brought upon the world a degree of harm that preponderates over the good it has accomplished, must remember that the fair

way of judging the Church is not to compare it with an ideal society that never could have been actualized on earth, or even with the best and most catholic religious fellowship conceivable to-day; but to compare it with any other religious organization possible at the time and under the circumstances in which it sprang into being. Christian doctrine, ritual, and ecclesiastical organization are, broadly speaking, a synthesis of the modernist Judaism of the first century with the paganism of that and later periods. The Christian element is tiny as compared with the entire mass. The question, however, is whether that element was a wholesome leaven, and whether it did beneficently leaven the lump. Suppose that, instead of Christianity, the predominant element in the synthesis had been Mithraism, or Manichæism, or Neo-Platonism of the type of Philo or Plotinus. Suppose any phase of the degenerate paganism pictured so vividly in the early books of St. Augustine's *City of God* had taken in the synthesis the place that was actually taken by the doctrine of Jesus and St. Paul: would the result have been better? Would the pagan hosts that overwhelmed the Empire have been more speedily initiated into the principles of civilization?

Let the despairing critic of the Church place himself imaginatively in the second or the third or the fourth century. Let him obliterate from his consciousness the memory of all that has since transpired, and contemplate the possible alternatives that then were open to the minds of men. Seeing that only a tiny *élite* could receive the teaching of Seneca, or Epictetus, or Marcus Aurelius, and that the world then was even less ready for the concretion of pure ethics into a cultus than it is now; seeing that truth must needs be embodied in some tale

if it is to enter in at lowly doors; and seeing that, even for the deepest minds (Plato's, for example), myth is an inevitable and indispensable vehicle for the communication of that vision which cannot be conveyed by language: which of the available tales would he have chosen? Which of those revered figures wherein men saw, or dreamed they saw, some incarnation of the spirit of eternal truth and goodness would he have selected as the object of reverence and worship? Can any fair student of history doubt that the choice that was made was the best possible,—that the figure of Christ was the least inadequate symbol of the God in man that was available?

If, now, it be admitted that the dominance of the Christian element in the religious amalgam which triumphant barbarism took over from Rome was beneficent, the next question is whether the good done to the Western world through the historic working-out of the Christian process was in any degree ascendant over the savageries and ignorances inevitably characteristic of a growth from barbarism into rudimentary civilization. We must keep vividly in mind the realism of the historic situation. That Goths and Huns, Teutons and Saxons, Franks and Vandals, should have been semi-barbarous, lustful, superstitious, ignorant, tyrannical, and dogmatic, was inevitable in the nature of things. That they should suddenly cease to be so through being baptized and called Christians, or ordained and called deacons, priests and bishops, is what nobody but a very superstitious person could for a moment expect. The only triumph of a refining influence that can reasonably be looked for is that they should occasionally have intermitted their savageries,—that once in a while there should be a

Charlemagne, an Alcuin, a John the Scot, capable of better things. Our gratitude is due to the institution which made possible these rare stray gleams of light. Who can measure the contributions to civilization which have directly and indirectly ensued through Ulfilas' translation of the Bible into Gothic? If it be urged that he would have done more good by translating Plato, the answer is that Plato would have been as remote from the understanding of Ulfilas and his contemporaries in Gothic as in the original Greek.

The theology of Tertullian and Augustine, it may be said, was barbarous. So be it. But be it remembered also that any ethical message which is to grip the consciousness and command the allegiance of barbarians must necessarily take to itself a barbaric integument, in order that it may come within their apperceptive range. That is why the Latin rather than the Greek Fathers became the dominant theologians of the West. The comparative humanity and intellectual subtlety of Jerome and Origen placed them outside the mental horizon of the barbarized West, as completely as Emerson and Bergson are beyond the ken of the average patron of the baseball field and the moving-picture show.

For those, then, who, like myself, lay claim to the noble style of free thinkers, I would sum up the argument thus: *Do not maintain in one breath that the Church is a human institution, and in the next pass criticisms which imply that it ought to have been superhuman and supernatural.*

Another consideration which must impress itself upon anybody who remains aware of facts as they are, as well as of the ideal, is that the Church—using the term in its broadest sense—remains to-day the only possible

channel for the communication of ethical ideals and an ethical dynamic to the masses of Europe and of our own country. I do not forget the enormous debt which mankind owes to the heretics, the innovators, and the free thinkers; but is it not equally true that, in so far as their spirit has acted upon the masses, it has been the Churches which willy-nilly supplied the channel through which it was mediated? Is it not the commonplace of historians of free thought that the Churches have continually been changing, especially during the last hundred years, in the direction of humanity and rationality? If Emerson and Matthew Arnold, Strauss and Renan, Seeley and Darwin, and the rest of the liberators have at all influenced the masses, has it not been chiefly at second-hand, through the teaching of preachers who have drunk directly of their spirit?

It will not do to hug to our souls any optimistic illusions as to the power of self-education and self-direction possessed by the generality. We have, to be sure, our free libraries, and our many cheap editions of the masterworks of human thought; yet the direct influence of these is at best small, and, even at that, is chiefly due to the personal advice of teachers and preachers. Does not every public teacher know that he can create a demand for a certain kind of books by his recommendation and advice? The fact is glaringly obvious that nothing but social organization and the direct influence of the living voice can avail to stem the flood of intellectual darkness and spiritual deficiency which still imperils all the nobler achievements of civilization. Yet, while the individualistic illusion, which in the teeth of the facts maintains the contrary, is still prevalent, one must insist upon the truth, even at the cost of seeming platitudinous. We

must not attempt, in the words of Milton, to "sequester out of the world, into Atlantick and Utopian polities."

We hold, then, these truths to be self-evident: first, that the Church (including under this designation all varieties of Christianity and Judaism) is not destined to disappear; secondly, that, if it were, this would be an unmixedly bad thing for America and Europe, and not less so from the point of view of the free thinker than from that of the rigid authoritarian; thirdly, that if the Churches did not exist, it would be necessary to invent them; fourthly, that to-day there is no machinery capable of replacing them or of doing the practical good which, in spite of all their limitations, they actually do accomplish; fifthly, that if the impossible did happen, and they were to disappear, the new organizations started by free-thinking humanists to replace them would either have to reproduce many of those features of the present Churches to which free thinkers commonly object, or else would necessarily fail of their purpose.

The present volume is accordingly written in a spirit of genuine friendship to the Churches, by one who sincerely desires for them an increasing influence and success; by one who deplores their narrowness, their mistakes and their present comparative inefficiency, only because he is convinced of the reality of the need which they are in part meeting, and which they could and ought to meet far more effectually.

Doubtless the direct influence of the Church on our modern populations is relatively less extensive than it was in former days. Here in America, according to the latest statistics I have seen, sixty per cent. of us have no Church connection whatever. Some of the Churches barely hold their own; others continue to grow, though

slowly. Generally speaking, the rate of increase has declined, relatively to the increase of population; in some cases almost to the vanishing-point. There is here ample warrant for discouragement. Yet those who feel that discouraging circumstances are less an occasion for apathy and despair than for an unprecedentedly vigorous tackling of the task, will do well to turn their attention to the other side of the shield.

Upon doing so, we note that in the United States today there are forty millions of people who are connected with religious bodies, and are to some extent influenced in the conduct of their lives by such ethical standards as the Churches uphold. It may perhaps be counted unfortunate that of these forty millions, no less than thirteen millions must be assigned to the Roman Church, which in practice has been the least ethical and the most anti-intellectual of all the Christian bodies. To be sure, there is no necessary reason why this should continue to be the case. The Roman Church, without any change in its hierarchical organization, could become as potent an influence for personal and public morality as any of its actual or possible rivals. Its great difficulty in America is that its priests are in general (by the admission of some of their own body) an ignorant and inferior class of men. No Church suffering from such a handicap can rise to the level of its possibilities. Those possibilities, in the case of the Roman Church, are represented by St. Francis and Dante, by Pascal, by Thomas à Kempis, not to say by John Henry Newman and George Tyrrell. The first things needful for the Roman Church are an improvement in the average calibre of its officials, and a change of emphasis from the miraculous and magical to the ethical elements of

its doctrine. It is by right no less the custodian of the humane, rationalistic and ethical spirit of Jesus, than any of the brood of rivals which historically derive from it.

Consider further the fact that the "Protestant Episcopal" Church in the United States now numbers over a million adherents. This, in view of the democratic and Puritan traditions of America, is a surprisingly large measure of success to have been achieved by the Anglican compromise, adapted as it was to the monarchical and aristocratic conditions of sixteenth-century England. It has of course been won by an extension of the compromising spirit; or, rather, by a development in the direction of democracy and comprehensiveness beyond anything that the Church of England has yet attained. There is far more liberty of prophesying in the "Protestant Episcopal" Church of America than in the English Establishment. The discovery of the amount of freedom of thought, speech and action that prevails among the clergy of the Episcopal Church in this country has been to me a most agreeable surprise. It is difficult to over-estimate the influence for good which such a body, inheriting the splendid intellectual, literary and æsthetic traditions of the English Church and utilizing the liberty which it has here acquired, *may* exert upon the future development of the nation.

Presbyterianism claims to be adding to its ranks thousands of new members every year. That denomination has also not been immune to the influence of the Time-Spirit. In the last twenty-five years it has achieved the bursting of some bonds, and the loosening of others. No more than any other human institution has it been proof against the forces of mental and spiritual evolu-

tion, as is testified by the attack upon its most "modernist" seminary in the General Assembly of 1916.

And so one might go through the entire list of the Christian denominations; but a detailed review of statistics is unnecessary to the present argument. One should not, however, overlook the fact that the large Jewish stratum of our population is undergoing a doctrinal transformation in the direction of catholicity, rationality and ethical quickening, exactly analogous to that which has so extensively modified the Christian bodies. In any large American city, the largest Jewish congregation is fairly certain to be the liberal one. Witness the positions in the life of New York and Chicago held respectively by Dr. Stephen Wise and Dr. Emil Hirsch, in St. Louis by Rabbi Sale, and by their radical brethren in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. My own task is the leadership of the Chicago Ethical Society, one of five congregations composing the American Ethical Movement. This Movement, founded by a living Hebrew prophet, has gone further in the direction of clarifying and stressing the ethical element, as that for the sake of which the entire machinery of religion exists, than any of the other denominations I have mentioned. In the Ethical Movement there is a free mingling of persons of Gentile and of Jewish origin, with a supersession of that distinction. This is a triumph not achieved in any Christian Church (except perhaps in some few Unitarian bodies) or in any Jewish congregation, however advanced.

The inclusion of liberal Judaism and the Ethical Movement, together with all Christian bodies, in the single category of the Church is wholly in accordance with the sociological and psychological truth of the situation,

however strenuously some may object to the classification. We are in truth all one Church, in spite of our divisions, just as we are in fact all one nation, though we be divided into Republicans and Democrats, socialists and individualists, syndicalists and anarchists. Nor can it be doubted that each of the divisions in religion has a justification for its existence, in the shape of a distinct contribution to the effort of human providence; just as, undoubtedly, each of the political groups strikes some note which is indispensable to the full symphony.

Individual religious bodies are no more to be taken at their own interpretation than other social institutions. They have to be viewed in the light of history, and studied in terms of their psychological and sociological function. When so regarded, they are all seen to have a high significance and potential value, though the significance and the value may be very different from those that they claim for themselves.

In estimating the influence that the churches are exercising upon contemporary life, one has to look beyond the statistics of membership, and beyond the ratio of their numbers to the total population of the country. Even from this point of view, however, their influence must necessarily be enormous. Never before in the history of the West has there been a nation whose Church embraced forty million human souls at one time; nor has there ever been an epoch in which religion in practice touched life at so many points as it does to-day. Generally speaking, the religion of our age is far more of a force in conduct than that of any former Christian epoch has been. It cannot be claimed, indeed, that we are more reverent than our ancestors, or that we hold our convictions with anything like the burning intensity

of the ancient martyrs or of the seventeenth-century Puritans. But we have enormously broadened that area of our life within which we recognize the applicability of our religious convictions. What is called the social message of Christianity is new, not in the sense that there has been an extension of the ethical doctrine of the Church, but in the sense that there has been a fuller recognition of what is involved in duty towards one's neighbour. Have not the business men of our country, to their intense disquietude, lately rediscovered the Ten Commandments? Are they not undergoing the chastening experience of learning the larger meaning of the verb "to steal"? The Socialists have rendered an invaluable service to religion,—not so much by their comparatively mechanical and pedantic doctrine of economic determinism, as by the spiritual implications, conscious and unconscious, of their propaganda.

Evolution, then, in the direction of mental freedom, intellectual honesty, scientific method, and democratic control has been and is going on throughout the entire range of the organized life of religion. The Church is still imperfect;—but so it will be on the morning of the day of judgment. So is the Republic; yet who for that reason wants to overthrow the Republic and establish a different system of government?

The case for the Churches, in short, is that we cannot do without them, any more than the anarchist can do without one or other of the forms of political society which he repudiates. The superior soul, who is so dissatisfied with all attempts to organize the life of religion that he withdraws from every Church, acts as an anarchist would who should go off to the wilderness and establish himself in airy and commodious lodgings in the

branches of a tree. The political anarchist generally has too much of the saving grace of inconsistency to act logically upon his principles. The religious anarchist, on the other hand, commonly does try to square his practice with his theory. He cannot completely succeed—it is inherently impossible that he should; but he does succeed in so far that both he and society suffer through his action.

In the Movement to which I belong, and in other independent religious organizations, there are many who conceive their fellowships to be the predestined successors of the Christian and Jewish Churches. They are fully entitled to their opinion, since freedom of thought is the breath of life in all such bodies; but this very principle entitles me to express my own conviction that such a development is improbable, because religious evolution does not proceed catastrophically. Take the Ethical Movement as an example. It has been in existence for just forty years; it numbers today in this country little more than 3000 members, divided into five Societies. At such a rate of progress, how soon could it be ready to assume the functions and responsibilities of the historic religious organizations?

Such clean-cut breaches with the past as some modern free thinkers imagine are seen to be impossible in the light both of evolutionary doctrine and of universal experience. No new movement is ever wholly new. Christianity in essence is as old as Judaism, and in its developed substance it is a synthesis of elements from a hundred varieties of paganism, as well as from Judaism. It was, in fact, a movement of permeation of existing religious organizations,—as is well expressed in its own metaphor of the leaven and the lump. The reformers

in modern movements misinterpret themselves and their mission when they talk of smashing the Churches, or expect the Churches to collapse and to be replaced by new societies.

The smallness in numbers of these modern movements, however, ceases to be in any way relevant or important, when we define accurately the task which devolves upon them. Their function is that of influencing the historic organizations, by stressing the importance of neglected factors, and by demonstrating the possibility of combining the principle of progress with the principle of order in religion. The doctrines and the organization of all the Churches need extensive overhauling, re-interpretation, and reconstruction, to adapt them to the exigencies of our complex life, and thereby to enable them to discharge adequately the indispensable task which constitutes their reason for existence. Experiment and innovation are as necessary here as in the life of science and of industry. Now, just as in science a few men can make experiments, which if successful can be adopted by the scientific world at large, and which if failures can save the world at large from the waste of effort involved in repeating them; so, in the economy of the religious life, small groups of thinkers and reformers can render an analogous service. This is the true justification for the existence of such bodies as the Societies for Ethical Culture. The nature of their task constrains them to give their main attention to the growing-points, so to speak, on the tree of the spiritual life. They cannot and need not erect a wholly new machinery adequate to the religious needs of mankind in general. A laboratory (if I may follow out the analogy) cannot be a substitute for a whole university. The

Church must be so various and multiform as to make provision for the spiritual needs of the entire range of human characters and temperaments. It is enough for an innovating and reforming organization that it shall, as the result of its work, permeate with its special message the life and work of the Church at large. For the Ethical Movement in America and in England one may fairly claim that it has not failed to contribute its quotum to this work.

CHAPTER II

THE CAUSES OF THE RELATIVE INEFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCHES

HAVING thus briefly sketched the reasons for my belief that the Church is entrusted with a permanent and indispensable function of vital import to humanity, let me now enumerate the causes of the present comparative inefficiency of the Churches, and the definite points in which they need to reform themselves, in order that they may extend their influence to the whole of our population and multiply the concrete benefits which they produce in the lives of their members, and through them in the common life. It is of course to be understood that the following accusations are true only in general. Doubtless on each point the reader will be able to think of exceptions. I would ask him to bear in mind that I am also conscious of these.

1. The Churches have subordinated life to creed, and, in so doing, have inverted the relation of the end and the means. They have forgotten that the entire machinery of doctrine and discipline, creeds and sacraments, rituals and liturgies, exists solely for the sake of purifying human character and rectifying human conduct. The true principle to be followed in this matter is adumbrated in the celebrated saying ascribed to Jesus: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; therefore man is lord also of the sabbath." [1]

[1] In quoting these words, I take the liberty of substituting for the ambiguous phrase "son of man" what authorities on the Aramaic dialect

The mistake on this point lies at the root of most of the crimes and blunders which give such an unedifying aspect to a great part of Christian history. The Church must now resolutely lay hold upon the principle of Jesus, and apply it unsparingly to the re-statement and re-interpretation of doctrine and to the modification of practice. Religion will then cease to seem hostile to advancing knowledge. It will no longer repel the large numbers of conscientious thinkers who refuse to come into the Church, either as clergy or laymen, so long as it is controlled by the implicit principle that traditional doctrines and methods are more important than the life to which they should be ancillary. The doctrine of Jesus is a radical humanistic one, and the Church should not hesitate to be as free and unconventional as its founder.

2. Acting upon the principle criticized in the foregoing paragraphs, the Churches have to a large extent overlooked the legitimate claims of the human intellect. The whole of the so-called conflict between science and religion was due to this mistake. In their anxiety to stress the miraculous uniqueness of Jesus, they have ignored the indispensable contribution to human salvation represented, let us say, by Socrates. There is surely no impiety in suggesting that the method and secret of Socrates are as necessary to the rounded development

declare to be its real meaning. I am not an Aramaic scholar; but any layman who follows closely the arguments of those who are (Professor Nathaniel Schmidt, for example, in his fine work entitled *The Prophet of Nazareth*), is bound to admit the cogency of their reasoning. The substitution, moreover, of "man" for "son of man" in this saying of Jesus, is the only means by which the logical force of his argument becomes visible. If "son of man" does not mean man in general, his "therefore" is hopelessly out of place.

of human character as the method and secret of Jesus. One may admit, for the sake of avoiding argument, that Jesus is pre-eminently *the* Saviour of the world, in the sense that no other figure in history has appealed so universally to the progressive portion of humanity as he.[1] Nor is it to be denied that the vital principle of freedom and completeness of thought, to which Socrates was a martyr, is implicit, and even to some extent explicit, in the teaching of Jesus. But so little is it obtruded in the New Testament tradition that it became possible for the Church to forget, or at least to ignore, this element. It has historically been absolutely false to the spirit of the great saying, "Why, even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?" and to St. Paul's "Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good." It has forgotten that the creed, for which it was so anxious to contend, cannot in strict accuracy be called the creed of one who has not subjected it to rigorous examination. The word belief, as W. K. Clifford remarked, "is desecrated when given to unproved and unquestioned statements." We can easily imagine with what distressed contempt Socrates would have regarded any would-be disciple who undertook to believe things simply because Socrates said them.[2] Can there be any doubt in the mind of a close student of the Gospels that the attitude of Jesus in similar circumstances would have been the

[1] I omit the question of the claims of Buddha and Mohammed because the adequate presentation of my reasons for rejecting them would involve a long and unprofitable digression.

[2] "I would ask you to be thinking of the truth and not of Socrates: agree with me, if I seem to you to be speaking the truth; or if not, withstand me might and main, that I may not deceive you as well as myself in my enthusiasm, and, like the bee, leave my sting in you before I die."—*Phaedo*, § 91.

same? It is an unpardonable limitation of the philosophy of the Christian doctrine of incarnation to encircle Jesus with a fence that isolates his nature from that of all other saviours and reformers. What is the meaning of the teaching that the true light lightens every man who comes into the world, if not that others are to be placed on the same plane with the founder of Christianity? I am not disputing the legitimacy of the pre-eminence ascribed to him. My contention is that, if first, he can only be *primus inter pares*. I contend further that the acceptance of this principle is in no wise inconsistent with his teaching, and that the Church can refuse to adopt it only at the cost of sacrificing an immense part of the good which it might otherwise achieve.

3. The doctrine of the transcendence of God has been over-emphasized by the Churches, to such an extent that the true proportions of the mission of Christianity have been almost completely forgotten. What I mean in this connection will become apparent if the reader will contrast the theory of the City of God which was elaborated by St. Augustine, with the idea of the Kingdom of God as we find it in the New Testament tradition.

St. Augustine, and after him the Western Church generally, conceived of human society in the mass as irredeemable. This was one of the many mischievous effects produced upon that powerful thinker's mind by his early acceptance of the Manichæan heresy. He never shook off the notion of the inherent vileness of matter, and of everything associated with it. Among other consequences of this doctrine, it followed that humanity, being (to use inexact popular language) a fusion of the material and the spiritual, is totally de-

praved, even on the spiritual side, by reason of this blending. Accordingly, for St. Augustine the City of God consists only of the angels, and of that small minority of human beings into whom, by the arbitrary grace of God, a new spiritual principle is infused.

The Christian doctrine (of which St. Augustine's is the antithesis) begins by affirming the immanence of God in humanity. Addressing himself to an indiscriminate muster of his contemporaries (who had received no sacraments, and who thus cannot be conceived of as regenerate in the Augustinian sense), Jesus begins his teaching with the flat and unqualified assertion, "The kingdom of God is within *you*." There are, to be sure, inconsistencies in the New Testament tradition, but the dominant note of the early followers of Jesus is that the world *in its totality* is the subject of redemption.[1] Even the Judaizers among the apostles believed this. The squabble between them and St. Paul was not as to this fact, but as to the means of realizing it. In the fourth Gospel the entire presentation of the Christian message centres in the idea that Christ had come in order "that *the world*, through him, might be saved." The first Epistle to Timothy may not be Pauline, and it may be as late as the most revolutionary critic chooses to affirm. The later it is, however, the more emphatically does it witness to the long persistence of the idea expressed in it, that God "is the saviour of *all men*, specially of them that believe."[2] The Church must return to this true primitive catholicity, and to the

[1] See the powerful and unfairly neglected treatise on *The World as the Subject of Redemption*, by the Hon. and Rev. W. H. Fremantle, Canon of Canterbury. (London: Rivingtons, 1885.)

[2] I Tim. iv, 10 (R. V.).

true doctrine of immanence, which consists in recognizing as a manifestation of God every gleam of good that appears in the world.

4. It was this same mistaken emphasis of the doctrine of divine transcendence which led to the interpretation of the sacraments in a magical instead of a social sense, with the result that they became converted into instruments of superstition as well as of salvation. Men have excommunicated and murdered one another for the sake of rival and unintelligible theories of the Eucharist, instead of realizing, through the interchange of mutual charity and helpfulness, the true significance of communion. Nobody can prove or disprove transubstantiation or consubstantiation. Nobody knows or can know whether the analysis of phenomena into substance and accidents is accurate, or whether, if it be so, the unknowable, non-spatial and ultra-sensible substratum of one phenomenon is capable of being transmuted into the substance of another, without assuming the accidents of that other. Inquiry into such problems may be an exhilarating mental gymnastic, but both one's moral sense and one's sense of humour recoil from the thought of excommunicating people because they refuse to accept a particular dogmatic affirmation as to their solution. Even the use of bread and wine for the purpose of the sacrament, though it perpetuates a long historic tradition, is, in itself, supremely unimportant. Any other articles of food and drink would serve the same purpose equally well, since the essence of the sacrament is the public commitment of those participating to love and charity toward their neighbours, to the restitution of ill-gotten gains, and to righteousness of life. The communicant has the sense that in thus pledg-

ing himself, he enters into the larger presence of the over-arching good, and is enabled to supplement from its inexhaustible resources his own feeble aspirations towards righteous life.

A similar simple and natural explanation can be given of the sacrament of baptism. The advantage of emphasizing this side of the matter is that the reality of the natural and social elements will not be denied, even by those who affirm also the magical elements. Whatever else baptism may be, it is first and foremost the assumption of responsibility by the community for the nurture of a new creature in the principles of justice and righteousness. The most extreme dogmatic theologians will admit that the production of this effect is the reason for the existence both of the sacraments and of the Church which ministers them. Yet how completely has this verifiable and most important side of the work of the Church been forgotten or neglected during the last fifteen hundred years!

5. The next most urgent respect in which the Church must reform itself is by abolishing the false finality ascribed to the creeds. It is the theory of their absolute value, rather than their actual content, which has made them a barrier to the growth of knowledge, and consequently, in the modern world, a danger to intellectual honesty. If the creeds are studied from the point of view of their historic function, it becomes evident that they were formulated not to provoke divisions, but to put an end to them. Those who take the most rigorous and literal view as to their truth and importance, cannot deny that they are at best inadequate expressions of realities which in their fullness transcend the limitations of human speech. Those, on the other hand, who take a

latitudinarian position with regard to doctrine, maintain that many of the positive statements in the creeds are baseless, and ineffectual as safeguards of the religious truths to which they were supposed to witness. For example, few men now suppose that in order to believe in the Incarnation it is necessary to believe in the Virgin Birth, or that the doctrine of Christ's victory over death cannot be held apart from belief in the resurrection of his body.

Nor is it certain that those who contend most vehemently for the old formulas, have fully fathomed the depths of their metaphysical subtlety. For example, most of the High Churchmen who to-day in England are contending for the retention of the Athanasian Creed, are wont to declare their belief in the personality of God,—that God is *a person*. They have failed to notice that the Athanasian Creed does not countenance this belief. God, according to that document, is the unity, the identity-in-difference, of three persons, but it is not stated that these three are one *person*. The Creed specifies with careful detail that, while each of the persons is incomprehensible, yet there are not three incomprehensibles, but one; that while each is God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God. It does not state, however, that there are not three persons, but one person. According to the Athanasian Creed, to ascribe personality to God is as unphilosophical as it would be, let us say, to ascribe it to humanity. Humanity is the one essence of hundreds of millions of persons, but it is not itself a person, nor has it any of the attributes of individuals. It may be a little mortifying to the ultra-orthodox, who have so zealously contended for the doctrine of the Trinity, and for the one Creed which unequivocally affirms it, to find

that that Creed when closely construed gives no support to the view of God which is commonly assumed to be orthodox.

My contention is not that the efforts of hard thinking by which theologians, like other philosophers, have endeavoured to define the nature of ultimate reality, should be given up. One of the greatest sins and dangers of the present age is its mental indolence. I protest only against the ascription of finality to the metaphysics of the fourth and fifth centuries. The early Church, by summoning representative councils and concentrating co-operative intellectual effort upon the attempt to formulate the deepest truths cognizable by the mind of man, set an excellent example, which ought to be followed to-day. We have had to wait for Bergson and the Pragmatists to remind us that a valid philosophy cannot be the work of any single thinker. Co-operative efforts, renewed from age to age, will be necessary to deepen our insight into the nature of ultimate reality; yet, even so, it would almost seem that this must for ever remain in its inmost essence incognizable. For this very reason, however, we should repudiate the suggestion that the thinking of the fifth century attained the utmost depth of the knowledge of truth "that the mortal glass wherein we contemplate can show us."

I plead, then, not so much for the rejection of the traditional creeds as for the right of every age to formulate its own creed. The so-called Athanasian formula may well stand on record as a monument of the insight and of the intense mental labour of those by whom it was drawn up. But the policy of the Church should be to offer such documents only as a challenge to the minds of its members in successive ages. By so doing, it would

not only make possible a virile development of thought and speculation, but it would also remove the handicap under which many of its most conscientious members and ministers are now labouring.

To this catalogue of the shortcomings of the Church, I may be permitted to add two more points, which arise from the peculiar circumstances of our immediate situation:

1. The activity of the clergy in every good work.
2. The lowering of the mental and moral calibre of the ministry.

1. In Mr. Arnold Bennett's amusing play entitled "What the Public Wants," a millionaire newspaper proprietor, who quite frankly is out to make money and cares nothing about the effect of his publications on the minds and morals of the public, gets into a high state of virtuous indignation at the suggestion that his journals ought to elevate the mind and taste of the public instead of depraving them. He is angry with his critics for suggesting that he ought to be (as he puts it) "a sort of cross between General Booth, H. G. Wells, and the Hague Conference."

Now, the chief difficulty under which the minister of religion labours to-day, is that the American public does seriously expect him to be a compound of Miss Jane Addams, Dr. Graham Taylor, Professor Zueblin, and Billy Sunday; and the worst of it is that the minister usually acquiesces in this conception of his job. By honestly attempting to be all these various things to all men, he succeeds in being none of them, and incidentally sacrifices his equipment for his special and distinctive

function. It is this state of things which constitutes the most imminent danger to the Church. Either the Church has a perfectly dignified and distinct task, which is not that of Mr. Zueblin or Dr. Taylor or Miss Addams, or else it is a belated imposture which only cumbers the ground.

The extent to which the clergy have lost sight of their special function, and of the means necessary to its discharge, is painfully illustrated on many sides. Take, for example, the recent book by Dr. Paul Moore Strayer on *The Reconstruction of the Church.* Dr. Strayer speaks for Presbyterianism; and, without any criticism of his personal qualifications, it may be said that if his own point of view and that which he gently criticizes are generally shared in that denomination, one need look no further for the cause of its relative failure. Many Presbyterians, like other church-members, are obsessed with the idea of "efficiency." They compare the Church with the factory, using the graceful and suggestive term "plant" to describe both institutions. As in the factory there is supposed to be a rigorous elimination of unproductive machinery and effort, so these reformers want to have each item of church activity measured up, catalogued, card-indexed, and all the rest of it, and to have everything cast out or changed which does not produce measurable returns.

Incidentally one may remark that the accepted notion that business is efficient is an enormous illusion. Because individual units of production are organized with scientific precision, we jump to the conclusion (sedulously fostered by the friends of things as they are) that business generally is entitled to the same commendation. Now the only way to judge of industry is to take distribution

together with production, and to consider both from the point of view of national economics and national well-being. So regarded, business in all the great industrial nations is still chaotic, wasteful, and in large measure inefficient. A river in which there is always an ample diet for the sharks would naturally be a paragon of efficiency from the sharks' point of view; but if one regards the river from the point of view of God, so to speak, it may appear to be quite otherwise. Such (be it gently whispered) is the state of things in regard to business.

Under this characteristic obsession—for which, indeed, they are not to be blamed, since so few of us escape it—many people have come to think that a Church ought to be, at one and the same time, a soup-kitchen, a gymnasium, a university extension centre, a social settlement, a labour bureau, and a headquarters of political reform activity; and, in virtue of being all these things, it may induce a few people to come on Sundays, as a sort of indulgence to the old-fashioned views of the parson, to hear a few apologetic remarks, sandwiched in between concert items, about God and the soul. This reminds one of the device resorted to by the Nonconformist bodies of England to attract the working class. They frankly despair of getting working-men to come to regular services, and so they have invented the nondescript performance entitled "a pleasant Sunday afternoon"—the adjective being presumably intended to mark the broad distinction between the afternoon and the morning and evening events. At this performance there is singing, and sometimes a brass or stringed band,—to emphasize the pleasantness,—and a speech by an outsider (it would never do to put the parson up!) on eugenics, woman

suffrage, trade unionism, Liberal or Labour politics—in fact, any mortal subject under heaven except religion; and at the end of the year the Church comes out with a flourish of statistics, rejoicing in the fashion in which it has attracted the "lapsed masses." The favourite phrase in advertising these performances is "brief, bright, brotherly." It is all very well, of course; but it is in fact a confession of the failure of the Church to do what it is there to do.

The idea of the institutional Church and of the polymath parson, when it is not taken for granted, is defended on the ground that the first apostles of Christianity made it a part of their task to provide for the needs of the poor, and that in its catacomb days (when its members were mainly of the slave class) the Church was a kind of combination labour union, sick-benefit society, and burial club.

Yet what an unreflecting conservatism is that which would base the programme of the Church to-day upon the precedent of things done under stress of necessity by the Church of the first three centuries! This very defence overlooks the fact that the apostles, at the earliest possible moment, handed over their charity-organization and social-settlement work to others, explicitly on the ground that "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." [1] These first promulgators of the Christian evangel were conscious of a distinctive task, for which they did not feel it necessary covertly to apologize, and which they would not sugar-coat by commending themselves to the public upon all sorts of adventitious grounds. Paul and Peter would not have been willing to waste hours listening to some

[1] Acts vi, 2.

applicant for work or charitable relief. They had other and more important business on hand. Yet to-day if a minister denies himself to such applicants, he is stigmatized as unchristian. It is his "job" to be at everybody's beck and call, at all hours of the day and night. You need not make an appointment with him. It is not as though he were a doctor or a lawyer or a dentist, or any other kind of a real man. He only has to preach on Sundays, and for the rest of the hundred and sixty-eight hours of the week he is everybody's obsequious factotum!

Now, although this intolerable state of things is largely acquiesced in by the ministers themselves, it nevertheless spells the ruin of their work. The function of the clergy is that of teachers and edifiers. It is their duty to see that their congregations develop continually in mind and soul, that they learn more from year to year, that they grow more refined, more morally sensitive, more responsive to that spiritual challenge of reality as a whole, which is poetically described as the voice and the hand of God. Wherever this is not happening the Church is failing, even though it be raising millions of dollars for building and organization and for so-called institutional work.[1]

The reference to apostolic precedent, moreover, ignores the crucial fact that in the modern world the principle of division of labour and differentiation of function

[1] The way in which preachers are beginning to disparage their essential function is illustrated by the following words of Dr. Strayer, in the volume to which I have referred: "Pastors give their time to the preparation of sermons for people who have heard enough sermons to make them saints if they practised one in fifty." It apparently does not occur to him that the failure of the hearers to practise what is preached to them shows that there must be something wrong with the sermons.

has led to the development of specific social organs, each entrusted with the expert handling of some one department of the manifold work which the institutional Church attempts to generalize. This principle of division of labour renders it manifestly impossible for any Church to be efficient in so many different activities at once. Moreover, in so far as it undertakes them, even though successfully, it is not a Church.

Suppose, to take a perfectly accurate analogy, a school attempted to become an "omnium gatherum" of all sorts of philanthropies, social and political reform activities, and labour organizations, meantime apologizing to its pupils for introducing occasional sugar-coated references to reading, writing, arithmetic and the like. It could not but be a hopeless failure as a school, as well as in each of the other attempted activities.

This analogy is the most exact that one could choose, because *the Church is in fact a school*, and must return to the conception of itself as such. It is a school, the purpose of which is not only to teach one special subject, but also to give instruction from a special point of view, and for a definite end, that shall cover all the manifold activities and interests of life. It may be said that the education given in the ordinary school is not religious; to which I would briefly reply that it is not then education. Even technical instruction fails of its main value if it is not inspired by and directed towards ideal ends. Or if it be said that the religious work of the Church is not education, my answer is then that it is not religion. Religion is the focussing of enlightened attention upon the sources of the supreme blessings of life, to obtain them and to secure their permanence and increase. Education that does not truly direct the will to this end

is an imposture, and a Church that does not deepen and multiply men's powers of reacting to and increasing the sum-total of the good in the world is a failure.

To put my case in the briefest and most challenging form possible, I would say that those things which the Churches to-day sugar-coat and apologize for, or bury under a mass of adventitious activities, are the only things with which they have any legitimate business; to wit, God, the soul, and salvation.

The reader, I trust, will not do me the injustice of supposing that in thus seeking to single out the special function of the Church, I am casting the least discredit upon the legitimate sphere of the other activities with which it concerns itself to-day. Of course we want social settlements; but these can only be efficient when they are the exclusive concern of workers who have received a special and expert training in their conduct and management. Certainly we cannot do without recreational centres for the young, especially in view of the abominable conditions of slum tenement life that we so cruelly and foolishly tolerate in our great cities. But here again is a function that cannot be discharged by casual and overworked amateurs. We need employment bureaus and labour unions, and we need—heaven knows we need—organizations for the elimination of political corruption and the cultivation of political intelligence. But the conduct of each of these is (or should be) the work of an expert specialist, who should devote to it the whole of his time and brains. The first condition of the "efficiency" we worship is the principle of one man one job. The parson, like the cobbler, must stick to his last.

No lesson, moreover, is now clearer than the fact

that these various reforming and philanthropic activities cannot be carried out on a sufficiently large scale except by the action of the community as a whole. Private-enterprise philanthropies are good and necessary because they serve to blaze the trail which the community may afterwards follow. They are investigation centres, to make known the facts and to plan the machinery for adequate relief. It is self-evident, for example, that the unemployment problem not only cannot be solved, but cannot even be understood, until we have a national system of labour exchanges established in every industrial centre of the country, with an efficiently elaborated machinery of co-operation. Such an organization is far too vast for any private body to attempt, and it must be armed with powers of inquiry and of action which could not be entrusted to any unofficial set of persons. Now, what is true in regard to unemployment is no less true in regard to the manifold provision for women and children, and for the unassimilated immigrant, which the new social conscience demands.

If, then, even specialized and scientific private organizations cannot deal adequately with our problems, how much more hopeless must be the attempt of the Church to deal with them in gross!

The difference between the Church and other schools is that the Church has constantly to keep in view life as a whole, and to regard the building up of character and the generation of enthusiasm for righteousness as its direct and immediate end. Education should, in any case, be lifelong, and the Church is the only organization which preserves even the tradition of this great truth. The Church may be defined as at once a school of the humanities for adults, and a store-house and

distributing centre of character-building force both for adults and children. (I speak, of course, of what it ought to be: not of what it usually is.) It has here a function which will permanently tax the highest energies of those devoted to its service. No man can be too good, and no man's time can be too long, for this supreme task. The clergyman ought to reserve at least four hours of every working day (that is, of every day) for reading and study, apart from the immediate work of preparing his discourses and his material for class teaching. If he does this conscientiously, he may, by the time he is forty, be really competent to grapple with the complex moral and spiritual needs of our age. In doing this work, he ought to be as jealous of his time, and of the claims of his task, as any banker or editor or doctor or lawyer. He ought to repudiate as essentially unreasonable the idea that he is to be constantly at the disposal of the out-of-work, or of idle members of his congregation seeking the luxury of private spiritual consultation and personally administered soothing syrup. To be sure, he needs contact with life as well as with books. But this he should seek at set times, and he should keep it rigorously under his own control. He must not suffer his studies to be rendered impossible through the unreasonable demands of those who have no respect for his time and his peculiar task.

The Church, then, being, as I have said, a school of the humanities, and a centre of character-building force—this, and nothing else—is only indirectly concerned with activities which do not promote this end. Its business is to bring the sum-total of the good in the world (conveniently called God) to the reinforcement of the good tendencies and the overthrow of the bad ones in

the individual, and to the purification of the common life.

Now to the attainment of these ends various means are necessary. Every means which does in any degree achieve them is to that extent justified by its results. All such instrumentalities are as natural, as legitimate, and as controllable as those by which schools are conducted or steamships run.

The educational work of the Church must be done in part logically, by direct teaching, and in part psychologically, by indirect teaching through atmosphere and suggestion. All the arts should be pressed into service to this end, since all of them are indispensable to the full development of the mind and the rounded and harmonious balance of qualities that constitutes a rich and mellow soul. Architecture, music, painting, sculpture, ritual, sacraments, vestments, and all the rest of the Church's instrumentalities—including perhaps many things that it has never yet tried—are legitimate, if and in so far as they help towards mental development and spiritual edification; and all of them are necessary if it be found that the full stature and the perfect grace of character cannot be achieved without them.

For certain types of human beings, any one or more of these means may be superfluous. But for mankind in the mass they are all necessary. Every form of religious ritual, from the gray silence of Quakerism to the utmost elaboration of the Roman High Mass, is perfectly natural, and if it were directed to the ends that I have suggested, it would be perfectly legitimate. Human salvation is too large and complex an end to be attained by any single means. It is too vital to be en-

dangered by the setting up of unverifiable dogmas as barriers between the individual and the natural devices by which he could be helped.

The reason why artistic and ritualistic aids to religious edification are by many good people thought dangerous is quite easy to see. It is because these things are enormously powerful, and because they have undoubtedly been misinterpreted and misused. Any educational device would incur the same condemnation if it were used to produce beliefs or conduct which merited disapproval. Suppose, for example, that history-teaching in our schools were used to make our children hate the Republic and the principle of democracy, and eager to work for the abolition of representative government and the establishment of absolute monarchy among us. It is palpable that the fault would lie not with the use, but with the abuse of history-teaching; and the remedy would not be the excision of history from the curriculum. Such a remedy would be at least as bad as the disease.

Exactly so is it in regard to the use of such devices as characterize the Roman Church, and other "ritualistic" bodies. There is nothing magical or miraculous in any of these devices. If they produce bad effects upon mind and character (and in some cases they undoubtedly do), this is because they are misinterpreted and directed to wrong ends. Now the very fact that an educational device is powerful for evil when misdirected constitutes a strong presumption that it would be as powerful for good if rightly understood and used for a legitimate end.

2. The other peculiarly modern reason for the relative inefficiency of the Church, to which I have alluded, is

the fact that, owing to various causes, the ministry of all denominations is being recruited from men of inferior mental calibre and force of personality. Of course there are exceptions; equally of course, any clerical gentleman who reads this will distinctly understand that I place him in the class of exceptions. My statement is in general true, I believe, in all the Western nations, but peculiarly so in our own country. We have only to glance back two or three generations to come upon a time when the very ablest men the country produced were attracted to the service of religion. The names of Phillips Brooks, of Beecher, of Parker, Channing, Emerson, and many others, will rush into every reader's memory. Certainly in Puritan New England not all the clergy were men of first-class ability; but the rule was that the preacher had a distinct vocation for his task, and was in general superior in education and in power of leadership to the majority of his congregation. To-day, unfortunately, this rule no longer holds.

For such a state of affairs there are three main causes. First comes the fact that, whereas formerly the preacher had had greater educational opportunities than most of his congregation, to-day he has seldom had more and frequently less of such opportunities than they. Secondly, the rewards offered to the preacher, in the shape not only of pecuniary emolument, but also of prestige and social estimation, are insignificant as compared with those offered by a moderately successful business career.

Now the hypnotizing idolatry of wealth and extravagance infects us all to-day. None of us is entirely proof against the seduction of the course described in the cynical words, "Get on, get honour, get honest." We have all to some extent imbibed the deadly ethical heresy

which is the corollary of materialistic economics, that honesty, and indeed all the other spiritual graces, are possible only as luxurious appendages to a wealthy life. Poverty is regarded as excluding the possibility of virtues and spiritual graces, and we actually tolerate and act upon the blasphemous assumption that a poor man cannot afford to be honest.

It is this moral disease, engendered by and reacting upon the enormous prosperity which the rapid development of the country's resources has produced, which leads public opinion to look almost contemptuously upon the man who does not gravitate unresistingly towards the corner in life where the showers of gold will fall most richly upon him. In two recent novels—Mr. Tarkington's *The Turmoil* and Mr. Winston Churchill's *A Far Country*—we have over-true pictures of the way in which elect souls are dragged or seduced into the service of "the Brute." Let us frankly face the fact that this thing is happening daily in a thousand prosperous homes. The American nature is not at bottom philistine and materialistic; it really has an enormous regard, even a superstitious reverence, for culture. But being, unfortunately, at the stage in which they know "the price of everything and the value of nothing," many people accept the delusion that culture is a thing that can be bought. It is assumed to consist in having the best-bound books in the handsomest bookcases, and the most expensive pictures on the most magnificent walls. Hence follows the belief that the ideal state of man is that in which he is able to give the highest price for the rarest object of art. We have not attained the stage of civilization (reached twenty-four centuries ago in Greece) in which it is felt that great

wealth is a disgrace, a thing to be kept secret if possible, or apologized for if it becomes publicly known. Accordingly, among other disastrous consequences, it comes about that the ablest men—those who might by a life of consecration produce the fine fruits of genius in art and literature—accept, instead of these high possibilities, the lower certainties of business, and take upon themselves the yoke of the machine. This is the chief cause for the relative inferiority of our present-day ministers of religion to their professional predecessors and their lay contemporaries.

The third cause of this state of things is one already hinted at in my remarks about the creeds. Men of keen intellectual integrity are unwilling to use even liturgical language, so long as this is assumed to be the exact and scientific expression of their inmost personal convictions, when it is not so in fact. The Church must place a different construction upon its creeds. It must either modify their language or make their use optional, and have it distinctly understood that they stand merely as historical monuments, and not as adequate expressions of the belief of men to-day. Otherwise they will remain what they are now, a stumbling-block in the path of the most desirable recruits to the service of the Church.

Lest my criticism seem too severe, I would point out that the clerical profession does not stand alone in its present defects. It is suffering from the inevitable results of forces which have led to a similar deterioration in our political life. The radical trouble in the latter department is that it has come to be regarded as a refuge for the relatively incompetent and for the more or less unscrupulous. This cannot be cured, any more

than can the difficulty in regard to religion, without a fundamental change in our general point of view. We must return to the idea of *noblesse oblige* as a principle of action, and as a motive that should determine young men in their choice of a career. We must again learn to see the real values of life as other than material, and inexpressible in terms of money. Only so shall we attract to the high and noble tasks of statesmanship and of spiritual leadership the finest types of character that our community can produce.

To sum up: The Church has not collapsed. It is to be hoped that it will not collapse. But in order that it may achieve the full efficiency desirable for it in the interests of mankind at large, it must adopt the following radical principles of reform:—

1. Re-interpretation of its function as educator, edifier and unifier of the nation.

2. Whole-hearted acceptance of the principle of freedom of thought for clergy and laity, and of the provisional and instrumental nature of doctrine.

3. Recognition of the nation as the true Church,—*i. e.*, as the real sphere of psychic life and character-building force, by which all individuals and groups within it are mainly influenced, and of local Churches as channels by which the spiritual resources of the nation are mediated to the individual.[1]

4. New experiments, under scientific test conditions, must be conducted in the use of liturgies, rituals, etc.; and anything in the traditional forms which does not make for mental and moral edification must be given up.

5. All activities of an institutional or social order which are irrelevant to or incompatible with the Church's

[1] See below, chap. viii.

special function, must be handed over to separate and specialized organizations.

6. First-rate men must again be attracted to the ministry, by the raising of the standard of admission, the restoration of perfect self-respect to the clergy through the relaxation of dogmatic tests and formulas, and by assuring to the clergy an adequate and dignified maintenance and the opportunity of real leadership in their communities.

CHAPTER III

THE RE-INTERPRETATION OF GOD

THE foregoing chapters have perhaps sufficiently indicated what the title of this volume is intended to convey,—that the present inquiry is to be confined almost exclusively to the psychological and sociological aspects of religion. It is my conviction that practical agreement is less impossible as the outcome of an investigation of these sides of the subject, than upon the basis of theological or metaphysical study.

But, before proceeding to consider the idea of God as a force in human life, I wish if possible to make it unmistakably clear that the limiting of attention to the immediately verifiable side of religion involves no denial of its transcendental aspects. Nor am I concerned to dispute that some of the transcendental doctrines concerning God may be necessarily implied in and deducible from actual events of experience. The limitation of the present inquiry, however, to facts of history and of personal and social life, is justified both by the necessity of keeping this book within manageable limits, and also by the hope that on this side lies the best chance of finding common ground.

Belief in God has been and is a tremendous motive force in conduct. It would, moreover, be paradoxical to maintain that there is no objective reality corresponding to that belief, and that the millions who have been energized and guided in their conduct by the

power which they called God were victims of a mere illusion. They did unquestionably have their experience,—an experience for which, as history shows, any number of explanatory theories may be framed. It may prove possible, by limiting attention to the experience itself, and prescinding from theological speculations, to arrive at a common understanding which shall be valid and indisputable so far as it goes, though leaving open many questions as to the remoter implications of the facts investigated.

1. Recent Developments.—The period which has elapsed since the Protestant Reformation has been marked by great activity in the field of religious thought. In the course of that development, Protestantism has gradually arrived at the solution of a fundamental inconsistency in the case which it presented to the world in the sixteenth century. One may say broadly that the reformed bodies originally set out with two mutually destructive principles, and that the subsequent course of events has been a struggle for supremacy between these. Protestantism appealed from the authority of Church and priest to that of the individual conscience. Unless the authority of direct personal experience could be validated, there was no basis for its rejection of the collective authority of the historic custodian of the faith. Yet, at the same time, Protestantism set up the final and infallible authority of the letter of the Bible as constituting its own court of appeal from the doctrinal and ethical corruptions of the Papacy. Just as the monastic orders had given a blind and superstitious deference to the received text of the Vulgate (against which Erasmus waged a memorable fight), so in the next century,—against the example and practice of

Luther, and even of Calvin,—the Protestant societies developed a superstitious deference for the letter of their vernacular translations. In the case of the English, this became (what it remains in some instances to this day) a conviction of the direct divine inspiration, the finality and infallibility of the King James Version of 1611.

The idea of the infallibility of any book, being by the nature of things incompatible with the supremacy of conscience, could not fail to lead to self-contradiction. The real controversy, then, of Protestant against Romanist was not as to reason *versus* authority, but as to the seat and nature of the ultimate authority in religion. Both affirmed that there was a court of appeal external to and rightfully despotic over the reason and conscience of the individual. As against the despotism of the living Church, Protestantism in its degenerate form asserted the despotism of the letter of the Bible—as construed by the groups into which it organized itself. How speedily the new creed degenerated in this fashion can be seen by a study of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, the classical treatise of Richard Hooker against the Puritans. Before the end of the sixteenth century, Hooker found it necessary to point out to them that, since scripture itself could not guarantee the authority of scripture, their position rested upon a circular argument which reduced it to absurdity.

On the other hand, the Catholic position at bottom involves an appeal to individual private judgment no less vital than that made by Protestantism. The claim of a living historical and collective authority to unconditional obedience cannot be so presented as to be self-evident. If a child born under Catholic influence

remains loyal to the Church in his mature life only because of the pressure of habit and the absence of thought, his allegiance is not a thing in which the heads of his Church can take any rational satisfaction. Or if the claim of the Catholic Church is presented to an outsider, he cannot become convinced of its validity without the exercise of a long and exceedingly complicated process of private judgment. It was such a process, lasting from 1833, or earlier, to 1845, which preceded and caused the submission of Newman to the Church of Rome. Hence it is somewhat of a misunderstanding to state the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism as consisting in the opposition between authority and private judgment. On the one hand, as we have seen, Protestantism affirms an infallible authority; on the other, Catholicism cannot escape from appealing to individual reason. Ultimately, therefore, both these systems of thought must rest upon the basis of personal spiritual experience. Except in so far as their claim can be justified by an analysis of such experience, it must fail.

Although the present-day situation in religion, as it affects us here in America, offers vital problems to the Catholic as well as to the Protestant, yet the historic development which led up to it was chiefly a matter of the working out of the latent implications of Protestantism. The nineteenth century witnessed a religious explosion; but the bomb which exploded had been set in the sixteenth, and it had taken three hundred years for the fuse to burn through.

It became apparent in the nineteenth century that an infallible book constitutes a worse fetter upon the human mind than an infallible living voice. No set of men can

remain altogether impervious to the currents of thought flowing around them. However slowly they move, move they must. The "Still it moves" of Galileo applies to the Church as well as to the earth. Not only the doctrine and philosophy, but even the practical attitude of the Church towards many secular interests has changed repeatedly in the course of history. But once the text of a book has been fixed, and infallibility ascribed to it, the possibility of progress is virtually eliminated. Hence the stark opposition and acute friction between the movement of science in the nineteenth century and the old-fashioned theology. Hence, too, the fact that this opposition was overcome only by the unqualified surrender of the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy.

But the so-called conflict between religion and science in the nineteenth century was only one of several lines of development which have converged in the religious situation that confronts us to-day. Let us for convenience enumerate four of these: (1) The advance of physical knowledge, culminating in the evolutionistic hypothesis, had effects far beyond the mere destruction of the notion of Biblical infallibility. (2) The latter illusion was also attacked, so to speak, from within, through the application of the principles of literary and historical criticism to the canon and text of the Bible itself. (3) Idealistic philosophy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was anti-traditional, and tended more and more to be true to its inherent nature, which, from the days of Plato onwards, has involved the assertion of the supremacy of individual reason and conscience as the judge not only of men but of gods. Kant no less than Hume is a destroyer of that slavish attitude toward external authority which all the old religious doctrines

imply. (4) The advance of democracy has led necessarily to changes in fundamental religious thought, since a revolt against despotism in the State must sooner or later involve a revolt against despotism in the Church, and against the conception of God as an absolute monarch.

I shall here treat only of three of the four lines of development above enumerated, omitting the question of Biblical criticism.

It now seems almost incredible that there ever can have been any difficulty to religious minds in the opposition between ascertained facts of physical science and the statements of the Bible. The notion of the infallibility of any ancient book is so inherently unworkable, and seems to be such "lives and lives behind us," that we find it difficult to realize the state of mind of those to whom it was a reality. It is no unfairness to the Hebrew scriptures to say that, from the point of view of science and philosophy, they are to an indefinite extent inferior not only to modern attainments, but to the attainments of other literatures contemporary with them. The works of Plato and Aristotle, while in some ways perhaps less inspired than the finest parts of the Old Testament, are throughout on a level of philosophic insight, logical power, and scientific grasp of reality incomparably higher than anything to be found either in the Old Testament or the New. Indeed, the only philosophical interpretation of Christian doctrine in the New Testament—the Logos theory of the Fourth Gospel—is nothing but an adaptation of one of Plato's fruitful ideas.

From the point of view of intellectual development, it has been a misfortune to the race that the superstition of infallibility did not attach itself rather to the Dia-

logues of Plato than to the poetry, prophecy and folk-lore of the ancient Jews. Of the two evils this would certainly have been the less, had a choice been possible. The past, however, is irrevocable; and we can only look back with a wonder not unmingled with pity at the distress caused to our grandfathers by the hopelessness of their attempts to square the revelation of their own time with that of the ancient Hebrews. The whole confusion arose from the assumption that the writers of the Bible had special sources of knowledge inaccessible to other human beings, and were supernaturally guarded against errors of fact.

From the standpoint of to-day we can further see that the conflict of the nineteenth century involved another delusion, to the effect that evolution rules out creation. This delusion seems to have been shared by many of the propagandists of the doctrine of evolution, as it certainly is to this day by those who are seeking to popularize that doctrine among the masses as the foundation of a system of materialistic philosophy. The Darwin-Spencer hypothesis, as we may call it, was really presupposed in much of the reasoning of scientific men long before it was formulated. It is, indeed, an inevitable corollary of the principle of causality. That principle can only mean that the forces of change in nature are inherent, and consequently that the present state of the universe is explicable in terms of its former states.

Now, those who fought the battle between science and theology felt that if this principle were sound, the notion of creation must necessarily be false. For many years few of the thinkers whose writings were sufficiently popular to enter into the general consciousness seem to have detected the fallacy of this antithesis. The most

conspicuous exception that occurs to one's mind at the moment is John Morley, who, in his essay *On Compromise*, in the early seventies, sounded a much-needed warning against the hypostatization of the word evolution. It is unfortunate that he did not greatly expand his pregnant observation that "Evolution is not a force, but a process; not a cause, but a law." To-day, after forty years, it is still necessary to insist upon this truth, which, when fully grasped, is sufficient of itself to annihilate the philosophy which the advocates of materialistic and mechanical determinism are spreading among the masses.

What do we mean when we say that evolution is a law? We mean that it is a description of observed uniformities of co-existence and sequence. It is a statement of the order in which things happen. It is a generalization of fact. Any specific change which we observe is due to some force or other; but the description of the process of change as evolution throws no light upon the nature of the forces causing change. Now the term "creation" necessarily implies a force. Creation, if it happens, is a cause; evolution is not a cause. How, then, can there be any mutual exclusion here? How can we speak of the world-process as being one *either* of creation *or* of evolution? It is perfectly conceivable that the world may be both created and evolved, —that the process descriptively summed up as evolution may be a process of creation. I do not affirm that it is so; my point is merely that the opposite idea, which lay at the root of the conflict between science and theological orthodoxy, is a fallacy, which a very small effort of careful thought suffices to dissipate.

Another of those almost comical superstitions which

seem always to spring up in the train of any attempt to popularize a philosophic or scientific doctrine, is the evolutionary illusion that all change is improvement. This idea still haunts many minds. An imaginary picture is drawn of the development from the amœba up to man, and under that picture is inscribed the word Progress, with a capital "P." Mr. Bertrand Russell, with delightfully acidulated humour, remarks that "whether the amœba would agree with this is not known." But, without consulting the amœba, we may point out that the evolutionary superstition involves an optimistic fatalism, which is calculated to disarm the moral judgment and to paralyze the energies of man. It is bad enough to transform evolution from a process into a force, but it is far worse to turn the force into a good fairy, and then to affirm guilelessly that this good fairy, which has, by a process of uninterrupted advance, metamorphosed the ape into the archbishop, may be trusted to continue its beneficent activities until it transmutes the archbishop into the archangel. Progress is a reality; but so is stagnation and so is retrogression; and any belief that human affairs can be made better except through ideals and through unremitting determination to transform those ideals into actualities, is a superstition which must speedily bring its own nemesis upon its heels.

Perhaps the most noteworthy defect in the old-fashioned evolutionist argument was its failure to account for variation. At this point it was highly vulnerable to the attack of those who held the doctrine of teleology in any form whatever,—even in the form in which it was held by Samuel Butler. It is all very well to talk of the struggle for existence and the survival of the

fittest, but the cardinal problem is that of the origin of the fittest. Natural selection cannot begin to operate until the variations upon which it is to work have come into being. Before there can be a struggle for existence the struggler must exist; and it therefore seems not quite philosophical to describe him as a product of his own struggle. The half-conscious recognition of this weakness of the evolutionary position is betrayed by the use of such a phrase as "spontaneous variations." This phrase must either mean "variations which had no cause at all" (in which case it involves the abandonment of the very possibility of science, and indeed a suicide of thought), or else it must mean "variations the cause of which is unknown." But this is a singular admission to be made by a philosophy which is triumphantly announcing the expulsion of all mystery from the world of experience.

There seemed only one way in which the difficulty could be got over, and that was by re-introducing, in modified form, those very ideas of creation and design which evolutionism was at first supposed to have rendered superfluous. Samuel Butler's theory amounts in effect to the substitution of a large number of designers, each with a limited intelligence and each indifferent to the plans of the others, for the one designer with unlimited resources which old-fashioned theology had postulated.

In our own day, M. Bergson is making heroic efforts to establish a theory which retains design but eliminates designers altogether. His *élan vital*, which explodes from nowhere and with no obvious cause, proceeds without any intelligence to carry out a work, every step of which, as Bergson traces it, would seem to require intelligence of the highest conceivable order. The curious thing about

the Bergsonian *élan* is that 'its handiwork continues to be perfectly intelligent, until it produces intelligence in man. Human reason is the only thing, apparently, which interferes with its rational working. Man's mind is a sort of will-o'-the-wisp, which leads us astray and opens between us and reality a gulf impassable. It prisons us up amid inveterate errors. It raises pseudo-problems, due to the forcing of reality into a conceptual framework which it cannot be made to fit without being denatured. It substitutes immobility for mobility, and unreal mathematical time (which M. Bergson's Ithuriel-spear quickly proves to be only a transmogrified kind of space) for real duration. It consequently gives us a world considerably less like true reality than the moving shadows cast by the cinematograph are like the scenes and acts which they portray. If it were not for the intellect, we should be perfectly capable of understanding the perpetual creation of living forms. It is logic which makes this understanding impossible, because it is of the nature of logic to fetter us within the circle of the given. By a bewilderingly brilliant process of reasoning, M. Bergson demonstrates that reasoning is not to be trusted. We have to fall back upon intuition. When we do so, we get a vision of reality which first came to M. Bergson as a result of his intense analytical scrutiny and his very effective criticism of the older theories of evolution. It is the negation both of mechanism and of finalism. Being neither creation nor evolution, it is yet both at once. This reminds one of the extraordinary sound emitted on a memorable occasion by Mr. Weller the Elder, "which, being neither a groan nor a grunt nor a gasp nor a growl, seemed to partake in some degree of the character of all four."

All of which is by no means intended for disparagement of M. Bergson and his most fascinating and valuable contribution to thought. When we reach the point where knowledge fails, we have frankly to choose among myths—or, as they are more politely called, hypotheses. This was done of old consciously by Plato, and unconsciously by the founders of all the religions. The myth of the *élan vital* is in many ways preferable to that of the world-machine, and to that of the "magnified and non-natural man" of the older theology. All that one need insist upon is that the framer of a myth shall recognize it for what it is. Let him say with Socrates, "I do not mean to affirm that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true—a man of sense should hardly say that. But I do say that . . . something of the kind is true." What we need is freedom of thought and fullness of thought, and the uprooting of the spirit of dogmatism. The old creationism, the later evolutionism, and the new Bergsonian blend, can dwell amicably together as speculations, and as partial expressions of the effort of mankind to grapple with a mystery which it cannot solve. There is design in the universe, and there is absence of design; there are progress and retrogression, creation and destruction. The essential achievement of Bergson is his demonstration that each and all of these ideas are, in Bacon's phrase, inadequate to the subtlety of nature.

2. Philosophical.—None of the great protagonists of the doctrine of evolution was a materialist. Whoever reads the writings of Spencer, of Huxley, of Darwin, or of Tyndall will see how much profounder is their teaching than the travesty of it which is to be found in the works of most of the popularizers. But, though the

great protagonists of the idea were not materialists, yet it is the shallow and noisy appropriators of their doctrine who alone have won the popular ear; and the evolutionism of the man in the street is a materialistic fairy-tale. Now the phenomenon that it imports us here to notice is that the popular apologetic of religion entirely failed to meet it on this ground, because popular religion, too, has always been materialistic. The Old Testament itself, despite the ethical grandeur of many of its parts, falls under this condemnation. Its ideas of creation, of God and the angels, and of the spirit of man are quite primitive, and are of a piece with that child-like anthropomorphism of the Greek populace, which is gently chidden in the Dialogues of Plato. It was necessarily difficult for those who regarded the Hebrew folk-lore as final truth to rise above the plane of materialism, upon which the so-called battle between science and religion was, for the most part, fought out.

It is largely due to the prevalence of such confusions of thought as those above noted that the ultimate problem at issue for religion is still almost universally formulated in terms of the question whether God *exists*. The true problem, as we shall see, relates to the nature of reality as experienced, and should be approached by way of a discrimination between the category *real-unreal* and that of *existent-non-existent*. The real is not conterminous with the existent. It is a broader, a more inclusive category. There is no paradox in the assertion that that which does not exist may be more real than that which does. Accordingly, there is no absurdity in stating that even if God does not exist, he may nevertheless be very real, and so it may not be necessary to invent him. Perchance, as Mr. Zangwill says, "we serve God

better, deeming He is not." Be it observed that I am begging no questions here. I am not "denying the existence of God." There is, however, this intellectual difficulty attaching to the popular idea of God's existence: that it either reduces God to the level of the finite, making him simply a unit in the indefinite multiplicity of objects, contra-distinguished from each of them as they are from each other; or else it merges him with the totality of existence in a pantheism which is practically indistinguishable from atheism.

It may indeed be maintained that the word "existence" is ambiguous, seeing that, as applied to spiritual reality, it means something quite different from what it signifies when applied to the phenomenal, the spatial, and the sensible. Since this is true, and in order to avoid the confusion between the two meanings of the term, it is better, when one is philosophizing, to use it only in the latter sense, as applying to that which falls within space and time. If the idealists are right in saying that existence means the possibility of being perceived, it must follow that that which perceives, but is itself imperceptible, cannot be reduced to the category of the existent. If man is the creator of time and space, it involves a *hysteron proteron* to trammel him within the limits of his own creation. Here I am but repeating a truth that was obvious to the mind of Socrates, who chaffs Crito for asking "How shall I bury you?" immediately after Crito has admitted the validity of arguments tending to show that Socrates was neither temporal nor spatial, and consequently could not be buried.[1]

We may express the argument in brief by saying that existence is strictly an intellectual category, to which

[1] *Phaedo*, § 115.

the subject is irreducible. Reality then becomes the volitional category, upon which the existent is conditional and dependent. It is true that even a bare existential judgment involves the subject together with the object in a synthetic unity, but the affirmation of reality connotes a committal of the will, which an existential judgment does not.

An apology is perhaps necessary for the introduction of these considerations into a treatise which is frankly intended for popular consumption, and does not pretend to merit or appeal for the attention of specialists in metaphysics or theology. I could not justify my subsequent arguments to the philosophic reader without offering a glimpse at the groundwork of my thought. While the lay mind is unprepared to grasp a presentation of the difference between the real and the existent, it has grasped the truth that to state the question of God in terms of existence annihilates in advance the possibility of solving it. Whether there is within time and space an instrumentality through which functions the individualized self-consciousness of some vastly magnified man, who fabricated the world of things and of organisms, is a question which no foreseeable extension of our knowledge could enable us to determine. We may say, however, that if God is in this sense a person, wholly other than you and I, but functioning through instruments in some sense analogous to your body and mine, he cannot then be either infinite or omnipotent.

But the study of this aspect of popular thought sets us upon the trail of the psychological basis of religion. The philosophy of Christianity presents us with a very different God from that to which its popular teaching,

its rituals and sacraments point. Whereas the orthodox metaphysic postulates an infinite, in whom the eternal discord between good and evil must necessarily be transcended and resolved, yet the practical working of Christianity points to a finite God—finite because personal, and because identified, not with the totality of existence, but exclusively with the good. The first of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England defines God as "the Maker and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible." Such a power would necessarily be the originator and sustainer of evil, as well as of good. But such a power is not what anybody has ever *practically* meant by God. It is merely the Spinozistic *natura naturans;* and most people really agree with John Stuart Mill as to the ab urdity of applying ethical predicates to nature.[1]

It is, however, in the realm of the ritualistic and other practices of religion that we should look for its psychological explanation; for these things precede the elaboration of systematic theologies. A distinguished metaphysician of our time has frankly said that "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct." The saying is most true; and accordingly we must refer to the instinct if we wish to trace the genesis of the metaphysic. Now the instinctive expression of religious faith takes the form of prayer to a man-like God, and of the practice of sacraments by which this man-like being can be, in a sense, coerced. The Christian metaphysic declares God to be omnipresent; yet the Eucharist, in the Catholic view, is a means of forcing him to become present at a particular point in

[1] See the most luminous and closely-reasoned essay on Nature in Mill's posthumous volume entitled *Three Essays on Religion.*

space, from which, in the very terms of the idea, he must otherwise and at other times be absent. This is but one of a hundred self-contradictions, the logical absurdity of which compels the conclusion that the practices are begotten of psychological needs, and that God is intended, as Professor Leuba says, not to be understood, but to be used.

Let us then refrain from posing vain questions of fact, which from inevitable lack of data are inherently insoluble, and let us see whether we may not arrive at more profitable results if we inquire into the nature of reality as experienced. I may point out in passing (without stopping to elaborate its implications) the fact that such an inquiry involves a dynamic and volitionalistic philosophy as against a static and intellectualistic one. For in essence the question "What is reality?" means, "What satisfies the organic and constitutional will of man?"

To reduce our problem to its very simplest terms, let us suppose the case of a child who is given a painted ball, got up to look like an apple, but made of pasteboard and filled with dust and ashes. If the child bites it and then says, "This is not a real apple," what does he mean? He means that the phenomenon is not such as to satisfy the desires evoked by its appearance; and those desires are the expression of certain needs of his nature which through experience he has learned can be satisfied by apples. The reality of the genuine apple consists in the fact that it meets this need. The painted imitation exists as truly as the real apple. For the intellect, the one phenomenon has every whit as much interest as the other. But it is the will which rules, above the intellect, in the field of the real and the valuable.

Now the religious craving of humanity is primarily a

craving for that which is beyond all peradventure *real.* Man becomes conscious within himself of spiritual needs which are as insistent as the craving of the body for food and drink. The religious need is the need for perfect righteousness, for inviolable justice, for utter purity in oneself and in others, and for such a system of relations among all rational agents as shall actualize these qualities and thereby satisfy the demand of the soul. These needs are but partially met by the imperfect world of things and persons in which we live. They cannot be explained, any more than self-conscious rationality can be explained, as an effect or product of the time-and-space process. It may be possible to account for the bodily cravings by reference to the make-up of the physical organism,—though at bottom it would be fully as rational to explain the organism as the result of the cravings;—but the demands of the spirit for ethical and rational satisfaction can never be accounted for by any such process of reduction to a physical basis. These demands transcend all the suggestions of experience; and the more experience disillusionizes us as to the possibility of meeting them, the more does their definiteness and intensity increase.

In Father George Tyrrell's posthumously published volume, entitled *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, he gives eloquent expression to this sad yet ennobling sense of the insatiable demand made upon the world by the deeps of our nature. He declares that the very presence of these cravings in us proclaims our affiliation with a transcendental order of spiritual reality. He compares the spirit of man to the beaver in captivity. Like the beaver, man "builds his dams across the floor; he cannot tell why. Not till he is in his native river will he under-

stand his restless instinct; and the river is beyond all his present experience and imagination—a missing link in his mind." [1] These pathetic words are of more value as a revelation of the personal experience of Father Tyrrell than as a statement of religious or philosophical truth. They doubtless contain some truth, but certainly more of pessimistic exaggeration. The truth in them is that we are conscious of needs which, being spiritual, can naturally be met only by spiritual means. The exaggeration is the suggestion that there can be no satisfaction for these needs so long as we are implicated in the world of time and space.

That world, however, is in its very nature a *means of communication* between spirit and spirit. Body is a vehicle, not an obstacle; a window, not an obscuring wall. Every man's ethical demand upon the universe is continually being met by the response of other spirits akin to his own, functioning through those very instruments of sense which sometimes seem like barriers and obstacles. To say that man in this life is in the position of a beaver, blindly obeying an instinct which is *altogether* incongruous with its environment, is to indict the world as an insane conspiracy against reason and conscience. Nor is there in this bitter pessimism any trace of that Christian philosophy which declares the phenomena of the sense-world (including the human body) to be necessary and pre-ordained channels for the communication of spiritual graces from soul to soul. What does Incarnation mean, if not that these temporal and spatial thought-forms are indispensable media for any manifestation of the divine?

[1] Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, chap. xii, § *a*, pp. 125–26. (London: Longmans, 1913.)

To this contention Father Tyrrell might conceivably have assented. But he would have proceeded to maintain that man's craving for spiritual reality and spiritual satisfaction is infinite, and consequently is inherently incapable of being satisfied under finite conditions. Such is the drift of his entire argument. Yet this is a confusion of thought, due to the partial survival in Tyrrell of the old dogmatic theology and scholastic philosophy. He has mistaken an infinite craving for a craving *for* the infinite; and he has further overlooked the difference between the satisfaction of such a craving and its extinction.

To take a very homely illustration: a person suffering from thirst develops a longing for water that seems altogether boundless. This infinite craving, however, is not a craving for an infinite quantity of water. It will be allayed by an absurdly finite amount. To be sure, it will subsequently reawaken; but this is what the sufferer desires, since the permanent stilling of organic demands is the very definition of bodily death. To treat thirst as a craving for an infinite quantity of water would be to seek not its satisfaction but its extinction; and this could only mean death.

Now, while all physical analogies to spiritual truths are necessarily inadequate, yet they are the only ones at our command. We must needs use them, while taking care not to be misled by them. To compare the needs of the soul to those of the body, as the psalmists were wont to do, is not absurd, even though the things compared are in truth incommensurable. The parallel holds at least in so far, that the seeming infinity of a craving is no index to the magnitude of that by which it may be allayed; and the partial and transient nature of the

solace available is an indispensable condition of the subsequent revival of that yearning which is life and creation. Tyrrell's demand, not for the satisfaction but for the extinction of spiritual needs, implies for the soul a destiny more like the Nirvana of Buddhism than the Christian City of God. The consciousness of needs that can be slaked to-day only to reawaken to-morrow with more insistent demands is the very stuff, the very condition, of individuality. Life is growth, and growth is the transcending of limitations, the surmounting of obstacles,—only to be challenged anon by greater obstacles and more formidable limitations in its progress. We must not befool ourselves, through the old rationalistic language about infinity and transcendence, into longing for an inundation of the spirit by satisfactions out of measure, under which the very life of the soul would be submerged and lost. My need of God is a need for spiritual goods that can be met and is met by other spirits finitely conditioned as I am. It is a need for a relation of perfect mutuality, perfect equality, perfect reciprocity between me and them. It is the yearning for a qualitative perfection, rather than a quantitative one. The cup of cold water may indeed imply an unfailing fountain as its source; but it is the cup that I need, not the inexhaustible stream. I need to have my thirst slaked, but not to be drowned. I wish to thirst again, not to have that inward incentive to creative activity extinguished for ever.

In admitting that the cup of water may imply the reservoir, we have perhaps approached as nearly as popular language and homely imagery can take us to the truth in Tyrrell's transcendentalism. We have to stand upon the ground of experience; but within experi-

ence we find the implication of a reality transcending it. One need not dispute the reasoning that the rational and ethical nature of man, as manifested amid the limitations of the space-and-time sequences, testifies to a universal realm of mind and conscience as the drop of water implies the ocean. If I find within myself qualities not made by my environment, but making and moulding it; if in the very possibility of my knowledge and evaluation of the sense-world there is implied that which cannot be derived from the sense-world: then I must, by the principles of common logic, postulate a source analogous in nature to that in myself which is thus transcendent. Of such a source, no less can be said than that it cannot be inferior to its product. Consciousness-in-general is not entirely unknowable. In so far as we know ourselves we may know it. But to define it *in terms of our limitations* is a procedure in no wise warranted by logic. Yet this is what we do when we speak of "the personality of God," in the meaning usually given to that phrase.

The inveterate anthropomorphism of religious thought is here displayed in its most conspicuous instance. Men insist in the same breath upon ascribing to God both personality and infinity; and they are unwilling to face the difficulty of disentangling these incompatible attributes. So far as experience goes, personality is *constituted* by its limitations. Finiteness is its very essence. I am I because I am not you. If the dam of otherness between us were broken through, the ensuing unification would involve the disappearance both of your personality and mine. Let us grant, to save dispute, that there must be a common source whence each of us draws the identical humanity which all share. It is incon-

ceivable that such a source could contain within itself all those barriers of difference and otherness which make personality possible. There may be in the undifferentiated totality of "mind-stuff" or "consciousness-in-general" something which, while unimaginable by us, is higher and greater than unitary personality. As Herbert Spencer remarked, the choice may be not between personality and something lower, but between personality and something higher.[1] But, while allowing for this possibility, we cannot ascribe individualized self-consciousness to the infinite without intolerable self-contradiction.

We are as men wandering in the dark subterranean passages of a mine, each carrying a little lamp, upon which, for us, everything depends. To extinguish it is death. Accordingly, each clings to his lamp with anxious intensity. Now, because we are always in the mine and have no conception of other conditions, we inevitably envisage all other possible spiritual life as similarly circumstanced. God, in our popular theology, is simply a bigger man groping in a vaster mine, and carrying a lamp which indeed throws its beams farther ahead, but is of the same type and construction as ours. That lamp is personality, individualized self-consciousness. May it not be that such personality on the plane of extra-spatial and super-temporal being would be as superfluous and irrelevant as the miner's lamp in the sunshine?

Yet the clinging of the religious spirit to the notion of personality may find elsewhere its justification. To the miner the lamp is truly all-important; and to us the preservation of self-conscious individuality is the in-

[1] *First Principles*, Part I, chap. v, § 31, par. 3.

dispensable condition of all spiritual achievement. The religious problem is a problem of the adjustment of relations among finite beings, whose separateness and difference are as marked and real as their identity. Our task is to superimpose an order of ethical relations upon the natural world of non-moral strifes and blind egotisms. Our perfection consists ideally in such an order as shall enable each to develop what is best in all, and thereby incidentally to bring out what is finest in himself. A man is not true to himself unless he does his best; but what can that best be except that which produces the best qualitative effect upon the character of others?

I must, then, revere my neighbour not as a reproduction of myself, but precisely in his uniqueness, in his otherness and difference from myself. I must not patronize him by treating him as though he were I. He is a unique and unprecedented synthesis of the universal elements of conscious rationality and volition. He is an induplicable original, a medal of which the die is lost. The religious problem (which is also the social problem) is the establishment of an order of relations among all rational creatures which shall provide scope for the actualization of all the latent possibilities of good in each, with a view to that perfection which can consist only in their harmonization.

The difference between this view and that of individualism or anarchism consists in its recognition of the interconnection and interaction between all lives, and of the fact that individual perfection is the establishment of right relations between oneself and others. The sacredness of the individual, and of those limitations which constitute his individuality, consists in his power of entering into these relations. Because he and his

contribution are unique, he is indispensable to the perfection of the spiritual order, since perfection is by its very definition unrealizable unless it be complete. The absence of one star destroys the constellation. The moral ideal, which is God, is the integrated harmony of all the potentialities of good in every actual and possible rational agent. Into this conception there enter, as indispensable elements, both the completeness of the series and the uniqueness of each of its terms; so that again we find ourselves face to face with the impossibility of thinking of God as a single personality, but also with the impossibility of eliminating the concept of personality from the idea of deity.

The common conception of God regards him as an already realized perfection, and declares that man is made in his image. Such a view, however, renders man superfluous: there can be no addition to perfection. If it be already achieved in God, what need can there be for images, reproducing by piecemeal fragmentary glimmerings of the already perfect, under conditions involving its violation and degradation? What could be more discouraging to man in his pathetic strivings after hard-won good than the thought that his effort adds nothing to the essential achievement of the world? On the other hand, what thought is more ennobling than the sense that I, with my poor effort, my aspiration and failure and renewed striving, am indispensable to the ideal perfection,—that without my contribution it cannot be, and therefore that God needs me as truly as I need him? Upon what other ground can we justify our concern for the redemption of human beings from inhuman conditions, except by seeing the truth that each most wretched pauper and most befouled criminal has in him

some element of spiritual uniqueness, without the realization of which the divine perfection is incomplete, and therefore imperfect, and therefore non-existent?

It is easy to see, when we turn to the fields of history and psychology, that the actual religious interest of humanity has always been in the establishment among men of such relations as I have hinted at. Men have used the term God to denote any source of power by which their insatiable need for just relations could in any degree be met. Matthew Arnold said that the word God has practically meant "the best one knows." It would, I think, be truer to say that God means "the best one can desire." This transfers the problem to the region of the will, and allows for the fact that desire perpetually outruns knowledge. We yearn for what is good before we know it; we desire the universal prevalence of a good which transcends all our possible knowledge.

In the light of what has now been said, the distinction I before tried to make between reality and existence may have grown clearer. The thing which any man desires so deeply that it acts as the magnet to his will, drawing his whole being into devotion to itself, is the supreme reality of his life. This truth is illustrated on every plane, the lowest as well as the highest. In commerce, men become absorbed in the pursuit of wealth which does not exist, but which for that very reason is to them more real than that which does exist. If the provisional definition of reality, as that which satisfies the will, be accepted, we shall have no difficulty in seeing that an ideal is the most real of all realities, because it is that which decides the fate of everything that merely exists. Ideals build up and destroy States and Churches. They determine the modifications effected by men even in the

physical configuration of the earth. They preside over the issues of life and death. In the clash between what is and what is desired consists the process and the progress of creation. The will to seek the good is God's effort at self-realization. That desire transcending knowledge, demanding and creating the impossible, removing mountains and exalting valleys, wringing, as George Eliot said, "a human music from the indifferent air,"—that desire is God.

But God is more than the desire. He is also whatever in any measure satisfies it. This truth is the only clue that can guide us through the labyrinth of religious beliefs which we find in history. So far as the contents of intellectualist doctrines are concerned, there is no common denominator to which the gods can be reduced. If the fetish of the African savage, the Chinese joss, the popular deities of Greece and the purified God of Socrates and Plato, the old Germanic deities and the Father of Jesus Christ—if all these are gods, it must be in virtue of their common function and of the common relation in which men have stood toward them. It cannot be in virtue of any objective quality common to all the gods, for there is none. The kaleidoscope of the history of religion becomes a picture only when we define the gods, in Aristotelian fashion, in terms of their function. They are all conceived as centres of power which can be drawn upon, and as sources of such blessings as to their worshippers seem the highest that life can offer. Religion is in practice the attempt to secure the favour and the active help of the sources of blessing by concentrating steadfast and reverent attention upon them.

The type of behaviour of all men towards their gods is the same as that which they observe towards fellow men

and animals.[1] Professor Leuba has grasped and worked out the implications of the fact that "the reason for the existence of religion is not the objective truth of its conceptions, but its biological value." [2] It is to be distinguished from the kind of behaviour by which men seek to control the non-living world, and from the magical practices by which extra-human agencies are assumed to be coerced. No doubt there is much of magic interblended with the specifically religious type of behaviour, but the distinction is always clear.

Now it is obvious that the beneficial, or supposedly beneficial, results of religious practices are not dependent upon the objective truth of the doctrines held by those who perform them. Otherwise it would be impossible for the same results to be secured by men of radically different theological belief. But it would also be impossible for any results at all to be reached if this type of behaviour did not bring men into *rapport* with some reality. If in literal strictness man had, as Tennyson said, "rolled the psalm to wintry skies, and built him fanes of *fruitless* prayer," the whole of religion would be nothing but a form of insanity, and no results in the strengthening of the will, in the deepening of moral purpose and the clarification of spiritual vision, could ensue from it. The reality invoked may be quite different in nature from what men have supposed it, just as

[1] This is pointed out by Professor J. H. Leuba in the opening chapter of his valuable book, entitled *A Psychological Study of Religion.* (New York: Macmillan, 1912.)

[2] I deprecate the use, in this otherwise excellent formula, of the term *biological.* If Professor Leuba had said *life-enhancing*, or any other term denoting the fact that the purpose of religion is not merely the static maintenance of life but the transcending of actually realized conditions, he would have commanded complete assent.

many of the forces of nature which have long been used for human ends are now known to be different from what they were formerly believed to be. Like these natural forces, however, it may be benignly indifferent to human misconception and ready to bestow its blessings upon all who seek them. We use electricity without understanding its nature; and it is in this fashion that men have used their gods.

The reality which has thus been worshipped and drawn upon for strength, encouragement and moral quickening has many verifiable aspects which can be laid hold upon. We may define it provisionally as the sum-total of the good in the world,—meaning by that phrase not merely a qualitative abstraction, but an active force in humanity, and also all the concrete factors of experience which actually do make for the satisfaction of men's constitutional needs and the realization of their ideal visions. That this is what has been practically meant by God is shown by the evidence of common speech and by the unsophisticated conduct of simple-minded religious people. The notion of providence and of its intervention points to a vague discrimination between those events and forces which are indifferent or hostile to human purpose and those which are friendly toward it and yield it furtherance.

Foremost in this latter category comes the good in man, consisting concretely of all the inward dispositions and outward acts which tend in the direction of establishing the ideal order of human relations. Added to these are all the forces of objective nature which are or can be made subservient to the same end.

The totality of the good as thus conceived is a real and positive fact of experience. In their attempt to under-

stand it, to account for its achievements, its failures, and its relation to the forces opposed to it, men have fallen back upon myth. The religious experience is so deep and intimate as to be inexpressible. Since it involves all the problems of philosophy and science, it necessarily outruns our powers of adequate intellectual formulation. That which cannot be expressed in words has to be put into symbols; and those symbols are the gods. The strife of Ormuzd and Ahriman, the all-but-victorious revolt of Satan against Jehovah, the torturing of the fire-bringer Prometheus by Jove,—these and a hundred other myths are the attempts which men have made to express the inexpressible.

Nothing could be more pathetic, or more calculated to inspire reverence for the essential fineness of humanity, than these attempts to convey through legends the demand which the soul of man makes upon the world, and the response of the world to that demand. The Hebrew prophets were impressed supremely by the majesty and the unconditional binding force of the imperative of conscience. To them, this was the very voice of God, and the thought of its violation was intolerable. They expressed their sense of the majesty of the law by objectifying it in the only embodiment of authority that was familiar to them. The personality of the king in the eastern world was the great emblem and centre of authority; and so they declared that God was a king incalculably great,—a king of kings and lord of lords.

The Christian founders were less impressed with the inexorable dignity of the ethical imperative than with its loveliness and beneficence; and so for them the picture changes to that of a parent. The eternal moral order is imaged as a father pitying his children. The nations

are prodigal sons who have wandered from the true relations in which their salvation consists, but the father is ready to welcome them with rejoicing the moment they are willing to return.

In the later Catholic mythology this sense of intimate kindliness and love expresses itself anew by the picture of a maternal element in the Godhead. The so-called Mariolatry of the Roman Church symbolizes an aspect of man's relation to the power of righteousness which corresponds to a deep experience; and it is one of the shortcomings of Protestantism that it failed to provide any expression for this. It was felt that at the back of things there was the intuitively compassionate heart of a mother, as well as the mingled sternness and tenderness of a father. Even in its most degenerate form (for example, in the almost erotic devotion manifested in St. Alfonso di Liguori's treatise on *Le Glorie di Maria*) the psychology of this attitude is traceable.

In order that justice may be done to these religious conceptions, it must be vividly realized that the experience underlying them all is profoundly real. Every god, from the brutes of primitive devil-worship to the mother-love and the father-love adored by St. Francis of Assisi, represents some aspect of the world in its relation to the human will; each expresses a mood and a reaction induced by actual occurrences of life. Poets have quite spontaneously reproduced these pictures of the universe,—even those who have furiously denied the objective truth of the doctrines of theology. All their indignation at man's inhumanity and at the indifference of nature has been prompted by their inexpugnable loyalty to "the God behind the gods." If we reject the old myths, our chief reason for doing so must be our sense

of their inadequacy. They do not exceed the truth; rather, they fall short of it. The law that commands and condemns us, the moral order to which we owe our being and with which is bound up all that we can hope for or aspire to, is yet nearer and more intimate than father or mother. The deepest element of our experience is not the sense of our dependence upon the universal power of good, but the sense of our identity with it. To call it "a power not ourselves" is to frame but a partial and misleading characterization of it. It is also ourselves,—or rather Ourself. It is that ultimate moral will in you and me which is identical with the ultimate will of all rational agents. Cancel all the private eccentricities, all the self-centred and self-regarding volitions and acts of men, out of which come their sorrows, their frustrations and their bitternesses, and there is left in each and in all one will,—the General Will of society as a whole,—which is identical with the universal moral law. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," says Job the mystic. Yes; because at bottom I am he,—in the sense that, by virtue of my constitution, I will the decree that slays me. The "great commanding good" that condemns and will destroy all that in me is base and unworthy, is the expression of my deepest spiritual *need*, and therefore of my real will, my inmost selfhood. This is the ultimate reality of experience: closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

If we can but train ourselves to the vivid realization of this truth, there will be an end to controversy between the theist and the atheist. We are all face to face with the same reality; our misunderstandings arise from our persistence in imposing our inadequate symbols of this reality upon one another as final and complete truth.

CHAPTER IV

THE RE-DISCOVERY OF JESUS CHRIST

A PECULIAR difficulty stands in the way of popular comprehension and appreciation of the light thrown by modern research upon the character and teaching of the founder of Christianity. The old dogmatic and uncritical interpretation of him is still vociferous and confident. Its basis, indeed, is definitely shattered. Anybody who is willing to take a little trouble can speedily familiarize himself with facts which render the ecclesiastical theory of Jesus as incredible as the story of Romulus and Remus. Yet, owing to a lack of courage on the part of those to whom the new light has come, and to the confusing multiplicity of views on points of detail entertained by the specialists; owing, also, to the almost hypnotizing effect produced by the clamant confidence of the old interpretation, the new views have scarcely yet begun to affect the general consciousness. Indeed, except for a growing minority of clergy and of thoughtful church-members, we are still in the position which confronted Matthew Arnold more than forty years ago. On the one hand, believers in the old view will hear of no change in it. Those, on the other hand, to whom that view is repellent are apt to be impatient of the whole subject; they ignore the Bible, and are not willing to submit it to a fair and unprejudiced examination. By this they lose immeasurably; but, as they are unconscious of their loss, they are content.

I desire in this chapter to enumerate a few points concerning the structure and contents of the Gospels, which are agreed upon by many competent critics, and to offer for the reader's consideration some views of my own as to the meaning and value of the teaching of Jesus. My purpose is not so much to expose the error of the older view; it is rather, by pointing out elements in the Gospels which are unquestionably there (however one may choose to explain them), to suggest an interpretation which seems forced upon us by the facts, and which throws upon the character of Jesus a new light: a light that should endear him to all who admire courage, freedom of thought, independence and originality of moral judgment, and faithfulness to ideals even unto death. My desire is to induce men to re-read the Gospels for themselves, by the aid of principles of criticism which will enable them to discriminate between earlier and later stages in the tradition. Thereby they will learn to disentangle the original elements, which from the humanistic point of view are incomparably grander than the theory of Christ that is embodied in the creeds and traditions of the Church.

The first thing needful is that the student should assert his own right to independent judgment. He must refuse to be browbeaten either by the dogmatism of the orthodox expounder, or by the authority of the ultra-learned specialist. The case of the Gospels is analogous to that of Shakespearian criticism. In both fields we are confronted with a vast literature of commentary and explication, comprising the views of a multitude of conflicting authorities. No living man could read all that has been written upon the Bible, or even upon the New Testament alone, though he gave his entire time to the

task. If one decided not to read the Gospels until one had mastered all the critical literature, one would never get to the Gospels at all. The wisest course, under the circumstances, is to follow a hint given by Sir Walter Raleigh in his most valuable little book on Shakespeare.[1] He advises that the reader should first get, by reading some one handbook on the subject, an approximately accurate notion of the chronological order of the plays and of the known facts of Shakespeare's life, and then should read the plays for himself, bringing his own critical judgment to bear upon their intrinsic beauties and their relative values.

So, in regard to the New Testament, I would counsel the lay student not to spend a great deal of time in reading criticism, either higher or lower, either orthodox or innovating. The doctors disagree endlessly over details, and in the nature of the case there is such a lack of reliable information regarding date and authorship, that confident judgment on such points is out of place even for specialists. Very few, moreover, of the expert students have brought to their task the qualifications that are most essential for it. These are, not the knowledge of enormous masses of facts, not the ability to perform conjuring-tricks in the way of textual interpretation, but wide experience of life, wide knowledge of and insight into general literature—especially poetry,—and freedom from prepossession and prejudice.

The layman cannot do better than to begin by reading or re-reading Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible*. He will soon discover that these books, though written forty years ago, are still amazingly up-to-date as regards essentials. He will,

[1] In the "English Men of Letters" series.

moreover, catch from Arnold that method of patient brooding over the text of the New Testament, which is the surest path to the attainment of real insight. He will learn in this way to allow for and to discount the special bias of Arnold, and to root out misguiding prejudice from himself. There is in Arnold a singular freedom from pedantry, a trained literary sense, and a genuine power of poetic analysis and construction, which renders him invaluable to all who seek wisdom rather than bare knowledge, and who have a practical interest in the *life-value* of great characters and great literature. These remarks apply to his treatment of the entire Bible, though my special interest at the moment is in his study of the teaching of Jesus.[1]

An insight less poetic, though at times even more penetrating, is displayed in the celebrated work by Sir John Seeley, entitled *Ecce Homo*. To read it is to become a better and a wiser man, though its study would not enable one to pass an examination in the technical problems of New Testament criticism. Arnold's poetic power is supplemented by the statesmanlike historic and social sense of Seeley. Arnold's thought is mainly of the salvation of individuals; Seeley's, of cities and nations. One learns from Seeley to appreciate the extraordinary freedom, originality and depth of insight displayed by some man or men whose thoughts are preserved in the Gospels. One does not know, at the end, whether these thoughts and sayings are actually those of Jesus, of John the Baptist or John the Presbyter; whether they come from Mark or "Q," from epistles by Paul, or from "pseudepigrapha." One does not know;

[1] In chapters vi, vii, and viii of *Literature and Dogma*, and chapters iv, v, and vi of *God and the Bible*.

but, what is more important, one does not care. The importance of these problems to the expert and the specialist cannot, indeed, be over-estimated; but, on the other hand, their importance to the layman, who wishes to be in touch with reality and to get light and strength for the tasks of life, can scarcely be under-estimated.

An almost unique combination of ethical and poetic insight with exhaustive scholarship is displayed in the great work on Jesus by Professor Nathaniel Schmidt of Cornell University.[1] Those who lack leisure would do well to read the latter part of the fifth chapter of this book (beginning at the middle of page 107 and continuing to page 134). They should then read from the beginning of chapter nine (on page 205) to the end of the volume.

Perhaps the finest example of scientifically competent and impartial criticism in this field is the masterly study of the Gospels contributed to the *Encyclopedia Biblica* by Professor Paul Schmiedel, of Zurich. It is a liberal education to read and re-read this long article, weighing it point by point in confrontation with the texts of the Gospels as cited and interpreted in it. The *Encyclopedia Biblica* can be consulted at almost any public library. It is unfortunate that the article on the Gospels is not reprinted in a volume by itself, since it is literally indispensable to all who desire not only to learn facts about the Gospels, but to train themselves in the art of sympathetic discrimination and exact study of the New Testament texts.

I have enumerated five sources of information, three at least of which (*i. e.*, the works of Seeley and Arnold)

[1] *The Prophet of Nazareth*, by Nathaniel Schmidt. (New York: Macmillan, 1905.)

are sneered at by some recent critics of the Bible, who accuse these authors of unscholarly procedure simply because they are not pedants, and are more concerned with life-values than with a microscopic analysis of data which have little meaning for the ordinary man. This, however, is precisely the reason for my high valuation and confident recommendation of them. What student has not grown weary of wading through the ponderous tomes, averaging twenty foot-notes to the page, in which theologians and anti-theologians devote endless chapters to the elaboration of arguments which are of no importance even if true, and which after all are mere speculations? Almost anybody can compile treatises of this kind, if he is willing to grub in libraries after the manner of Dominie Sampson; but nobody would be profited by his exertions. For such hack-work little equipment is needed beyond the tireless industry of the routineer, a certain amount of linguistic skill, and an "impartiality" which really means blindness to the relative importance of facts. The thorough study of the higher criticism of the Bible compels one to labour through endless jungles of this kind; and this is perhaps one of the chief reasons why the very few incontrovertible facts and established results in this field have not become widely known.

There are only two essential truths in connection with the Gospels which can be regarded as beyond dispute. The first is that nobody knows by whom or exactly when they were written; the second, that the accounts they give of the career of Jesus are hopelessly inconsistent, so that it is impossible to construct from them a coherent story of his life. Probably there are more *Lives of Jesus* in existence than there are books on any other one subject. Yet all of them are founded on these

four brief ancient documents, which are not contemporary with the alleged events they record, nor written by eye-witnesses of them; and which, as we have said, are at vital points irreconcilable. No stronger proof of this contention need be looked for than the heroic efforts which have been made in the Church, from the time of Tatian onwards, to "harmonize" these four accounts. Here we have a long series of efforts, each tacitly confessing the failure of all that preceded it, to do what would not need doing if we had biographical accounts from contemporaries of Jesus and eye-witnesses of his work.

We do not know the date of the birth of Jesus; we do not know positively the place. We do not know at what age he entered upon his ministry, or how long it lasted. We do not know his age at death, nor the year in which he died. Not until centuries after his time was a date arbitrarily chosen for the observance of his nativity; and, when the choice was made, it fell upon the birthday of the sun-gods. Of his parents we know little more than that their names were Joseph and Mary, and that he was not their only son. The facts of his birth and childhood are lost in a cloud of legends; and the same is true of the end of his career. All that we can feel certain of is that he died by crucifixion.

This paucity of information concerning the outward career of one who, after more than a century's development of his gospel, was enrolled among the gods, has led some thinkers to question whether the name of Jesus belongs to history at all. Within the last few years several volumes have been written to prove that it does not. I have not space to enter into this unprofitable controversy. I can only record here my conviction that the mythologists are mistaken. The

chief reason for believing in the historicity of Jesus is the conflict between the picture of him which criticism can reconstruct from the oldest strata of the Gospels, as a human being with virtually no supernatural attributes, and the picture afterwards fabricated of him and framed in the œcumenical creeds, as a transcendental being with scarcely any vestige of humanity left about him. If, to put it briefly, Jesus had from the first been conceived of as a superhuman person, and had afterwards (by some extraordinary collective hallucination) been mistakenly supposed to have lived on earth as a man, then the development traceable in the accounts of him, from the earliest fragments of the New Testament to the time of the framing of the creeds, would have been the precise opposite of what it can be shown to have been.

Our Gospels, whatever their dates, are not the oldest part of the New Testament. It is possible—indeed, it is probable—that they are founded upon bare collections of the sayings of Jesus, made by and for men who, having known him, did not need biographical information. But it is certain that by the time the demand arose for an account of his life, those who could have told the story authentically were no longer available. When the Christian movement began to spread as a missionary faith there was a special and well-understood reason why its converts did not at first demand written accounts of the earthly career of their founder. This reason was not the alleged fact that Jesus had never lived on earth at all, but the ascertained fact that those who believed in him expected very shortly to see him coming on the clouds from heaven, and to be taken up to join him there.

The oldest fragments of the New Testament are

certain letters of St. Paul, and in these the most palpable fact is the faith of the writer in the speedy second coming of his Lord, to wind up the affairs of a bankrupt and hopeless world. Now when men are in a state of tense expectation of a cosmic transformation-scene, when their whole gaze is focussed with earnest yearning upon the future, it is not to be expected that they shall devote themselves anxiously to the collection of data concerning the career of one whose earthly life seems to them but a trivial incident in the midst of everlastingness. St. Paul was resolved not to know Christ "after the flesh," even though he had formerly done so. His peculiar position, moreover, led him to disparage the personal intimacy of his colleagues with Jesus during his earthly life, since the exaltation of that connection implied a serious criticism of his own apostolic credentials. Thus is explained the fact of the silence of the earliest witness, which the mythologists are wont to insist upon as the chief evidence of their contention. Paul was silent because he deliberately wished to draw the attention of his converts away from the life of Jesus, and to concentrate it upon his death and resurrection. I am not aware that any of the mythological school have denied St. Paul's intense and earnest belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus. But it is difficult to see how a man could believe in the resurrection of Jesus without believing in his death, and in his death without believing in his earthly life. Nor is it possible to read the Epistles without being convinced of the overmastering impression which had been made upon Paul by the personality that inspired him. It is sheer blindness to say, as one of the new myth-makers does, that Paul's Jesus is a mere name, "a crucified phantom"—whatever that may be. The one self-evident

and indisputable fact in Paul's career is that he regarded himself as the disciple and minister of another. He was no cult-founder, no propagator of a movement originating with himself. "I live," he said, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." With Christ he was crucified, that he might share in Christ's resurrection. His language about the unsearchable riches in which he had been privileged to share, his desire to depart and to be with the person he adored, his fidelity to a mission full of defeat and discouragement,—all these facts testify not to hallucination or self-deception, but to such an inspiration as necessarily implies behind it a personality of rare and exalted power.[1] As easily explain Plato without Socrates or Boswell without Johnson as Paul without Jesus.

It is needless, however, to pursue an argument which to the majority both of special students and of laymen is obvious; and the case of Paul is only one of a score of cruces which confront those who seek to remove Jesus from the field of history. Equally insurmountable obstacles to such an attempt await us in the pages of the Gospels themselves. The moment it is explained why the first Christians did not desire information about their Lord's career, the objection on the ground of the incoherence and incredibility of the biographical details in the Gospels is dissipated. But there is a further incontestable fact of the highest significance. Just as St. Paul is indubitably inspired by another, whom he counts immeasurably greater than himself, so it becomes obvious as we read the Gospels that their writers also are but the mouthpieces of one greater than they, the communicators of a teaching which *they*, at all events, could not have invented, the depicters of a personality which

[1] Gal. ii, 20; Rom. vi, 3–7; Philip. iii, 7–12, etc.

they were self-evidently incapable of creating. One cannot study the Gospels critically without being impressed by the naïveté and dulness, the lack of insight and imagination, of their compilers. If we see children making clay figures and ornamenting them with jewels, we do not need to be told that the children did not make the jewels. There needs no elaborate process of critical analysis to assure us upon the point. Just such children were the evangelists; and just so incredible is it that they can have invented the teaching, or the traits of personal character disclosed by Jesus, which their narratives have perpetuated for us. It might as well be argued that Heminge and Condell wrote the plays of Shakespeare as that the evangelists invented Jesus and his teachings.

The consensus of recent criticism asserts that the Gospel ascribed in our version to Mark was in its original form the oldest of the Synoptics, though in the form in which it has reached us many later touches have been introduced. Matthew and Luke, according to the hypothesis most generally accepted, proceeded upon a document substantially identical with Mark, and upon one other document, now lost, but capable of being partially reconstructed from their text. The lay reader can get for himself a fairly clear idea of the evidence upon this point.[1] Let him place the three Synoptics side by side, and go through them to find out what all three have in common. He will find that both Matthew and Luke have a great deal from Mark. When he has thus used up Mark, let him examine Matthew and Luke to find out how much of what remains is common to them. He will again find a great deal which they share, but which is not in Mark. By this

[1] It is admirably set forth in Dr. F. C. Conybeare's *Myth, Magic and Morals*, chapters v–viii. (London: Watts & Co., 1909.)

time exceedingly little will be left of Luke and Matthew. The internal evidence further shows that both Matthew and Luke freely adapted the material which they drew from their sources, and did so with clearly defined purposes.

The object of the Matthew Gospel is to demonstrate to Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. As such, his message must be exclusively to the Jews. He must be of Davidic lineage, and he must fulfil the prophecies of the Old Testament applying to the Messiah. The Matthew Gospel subordinates everything and manipulates everything to the end of sustaining these theses. Luke, on the other hand, writes as a Gentile to Gentiles, selecting and adapting his material with a view to demonstrating the universality of Christ's appeal. Thus from Matthew are omitted such parables as those of the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, the Pharisee and the Publican, and the Rich Man and Lazarus, all of which are unmistakably universal in their humanistic appeal. Matthew inserts many Judaizing particularities which Luke omits; for instance, the command not to cast pearls before swine,[1] the instruction to the disciples not to go into the way of the Gentiles or enter into any city of the Samaritans,[2] and the unequivocal statement put upon the lips of Jesus, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." [3]

This contrast between Matthew and Luke comes out in numerous details. Repeatedly Luke voices condemnations of the entire Jewish people which Matthew either omits or converts into condemnations of the Pharisees or other special groups, so as to remove the impression that the Jewish Messiah condemned his own

[1] Matt. vii, 6. [2] Matt. x, 5. [3] Matt. xv, 24.

nation wholesale. Several of these little traits will be detected if Matthew's version of the parable of the Talents (xxv, 14–30) be compared with Luke's (xix, 12–27.)

The catholicity of Luke as compared with Matthew is an evidence of relative lateness. Mark seems to have in mind the problem of explaining to Gentiles why, if Jesus was the Messiah, he should have been rejected by his own people. He does this by the hypothesis of secrecy: Jesus would not suffer his messianic character to be known. Matthew, though he retains some traces of the secrecy hypothesis, addresses himself throughout to the task of convincing the Jews that they ought to have received Jesus as the Messiah. Luke, writing to Gentiles, is no longer conscious of the necessity of reconciling the alleged Messiahship with the Jewish rejection of it. The difficulty has evidently been got over in the meantime.

The argument for the priority of Mark is further reinforced by the fact that many human traits in the character of Jesus are presented in it without any sophistication, whereas these same incidents in Matthew or Luke are doctored to render them compatible with the reverence for the person of Jesus which was developing among the Christian groups. For example, in Mark vi, 5, it is represented that Jesus, preaching in his own country, discovered that, owing to the incredulity of those who had always known him, "he could there do no mighty work." In Mark (iii, 21) we are told that it was his *friends* who said, "He is beside himself." Matthew and Luke ascribe such sayings to the Pharisees or to the "multitudes." John (x, 20) declares that it was "the Jews" who said of Jesus, "He hath a devil and is mad."

The development of the legend is excellently illus-

trated by the stories of the Birth and Baptism of Jesus. Mark has no birth-story; those of Matthew and Luke are late additions, and are in complete conflict with each other; and John, without any allusion at all to the circumstances of the birth, simply affirms that "the Word was made flesh," though later he twice [1] represents men speaking of Jesus as "the son of Joseph," without any correction of their opinion. The genealogies in Matthew and Luke have nothing in common except the motive of demonstrating the Davidic descent of Jesus. This they do by tracing from David the pedigree of—*Joseph.* They thus represent a stage of belief when Jesus was held to be something less than God, for no Jew had ever supposed that the Messiah was to be an incarnation of the divine personality,—Yahwe in bodily form on earth. They also prove that when they were compiled Jesus was believed to have been by normal generation the son of Joseph the carpenter. The subsequent working-over of these genealogies to make them consistent with the doctrine of virgin birth reduces them to palpable absurdity. How can the descent of a man from David be proved by giving the pedigree of one who was *not* his father? We know that in early times manuscripts read at Matt. i, 16, "Joseph begat Jesus." We have one such ancient manuscript,—the Sinaitic Syriac palimpsest. Even without it, however, the evident logic of the case would force upon us the conviction that this was the original reading. In Luke iii, 23, the words "as was supposed" are an insertion, which, like the change in Matt. i, 16, makes utter nonsense of the pedigree which it introduces. The genealogies are indeed mutually exclusive, since they differ in detail

[1] John i, 45, vi, 42.

throughout. Their fortunate survival, however, enables us to trace, more confidently than we otherwise could have done, the growth of that myth which culminates in the œcumenical creeds.

The story of the Baptism illustrates the development from another aspect. According to Mark's account (i, 9–11) there is no recognition of Jesus by John, and the vision of the dove descending from heaven is seen by Jesus alone. In Matt. (iii, 13–17), John, recognizing Jesus, seeks to dissuade him from undergoing baptism, on the ground that John needed to be baptized by Jesus, and not *vice versâ*. In Luke (iii, 22) it is implied that the theophany was witnessed by the multitude. According to John (i, 29–34), the Baptist recognizes and announces Jesus not as the Jewish Messiah, but as the eternal divine saviour of the world. All these stories, with the possible exception of Mark's, are refuted by the subsequent testimony of Matthew and Luke, which record that John sent messengers from his prison to inquire of Jesus, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" [1]—an impossible question to be addressed to one whom he had from the first perceived to be either the Messiah or the Lamb of God, especially if that perception had been ratified by a heavenly vision and voice.

The myth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus may have originated in misunderstanding of some of his sayings. This apparently is the explanation of many of the alleged miracles.[2] Several times the records betray both the good faith and the incompetence of the disciples by relating how Jesus was irritated by the impossibility of

[1] Matt. xi, 3, Luke vii, 19.

[2] See Schmiedel, art. *Gospels* in *Ency. Bib.*, §§ 137, 140, 142.

making his associates understand him. Thus, for instance, the miracle of the feeding of multitudes with a few loaves and fishes probably represents a misunderstanding of the metaphorical use by Jesus of the term bread, in allusions to his teaching as the bread of life. The resurrection stories may in like manner have taken their rise from sayings such as that preserved in Mark viii, 35: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life [for my sake and the gospel's], the same shall save it." [1] The misapprehension of such an idea by literal or pedantic minds, reinforced later by misunderstood passages from the Old Testament, may have given rise to the stories of the bodily resurrection.

These, however, fall by their inner incompatibilities. One has only to place them side by side to see that they are hopelessly inconsistent with each other, and also with the version of St. Paul. The Gospel of Mark originally ended at the eighth verse of chapter xvi.[2] All that is narrated of the resurrection up to that point is the story of an empty tomb and a vision of a young man in a white garment seen by two frightened women. Luke multiplies the one young man into two, and the long white garment into "shining garments," and then proceeds to add a number of details not given in any other Gospel. Matthew explains the rolling away of the stone by an earthquake, and transforms Mark's young man into an angel of the Lord, descended from heaven, with a countenance like lightning. Matthew also preserves

[1] Comparison with Matt. x, 39, and Luke xvii, 33, together with other reasons, makes it highly probable that the bracketed words did not form part of the original saying.

[2] See footnote to Mark xvi, 9, in R. V.

Mark's tradition that the risen Jesus, according to previous appointment, had gone to Galilee. Luke, on the contrary, declares that Jesus met two disciples near Jerusalem, with whom he returned to the city. John's version differs from all the rest by having two of the disciples on hand to meet the *one* woman who discovered that the sepulchre was open. This one woman, after her interview with *two* angels at the tomb, turns and meets Jesus in the garden, but does not recognize him. John has many other post-resurrection stories peculiar to himself, among them that of the scepticism of Thomas. This incident probably finds its motive in the need of refuting the Docetic heresy, according to which Jesus had never really lived in the flesh at all, but was, throughout his earthly career, a mere phantom.

The growth of the legend, and our knowledge of the motives for inventing it, justify us in setting it aside as unhistorical, without wasting time over the problem of whether the re-animation of a truly dead man after thirty-six hours or more is or is not physically possible. Huxley, following some writers of the older German rationalistic school, argues that there is no clear proof in the Gospels that Jesus was really dead when he was taken down from the cross. He might simply have swooned, and emerged from his grave when he recovered. According to Mark it cannot be said that Jesus remained in his grave until the morning of the third day. It was then that the stone was *found* to have been removed; but it might have been displaced at any time on the day preceding. One need not take the Huxleian hypothesis too seriously; yet the very fact that it could be framed without forcing the testimony of the Gospels demonstrates the looseness of structure of the narratives.

The miraculous legend of Jesus, however, grew up only because of the impression produced upon simple-minded contemporaries by his personality and his teaching; and for us to-day it is by his teaching that he must stand or fall. If we find evidence justifying the early impression that "never man spake" as he, this will give us sufficient ground to entertain for him a rational veneration, and to ascribe to his words the same kind of authority as we attribute to any other sage or artist,—the degree of the authority varying with the comparative value of the message. The modern religious revolution does not consist in the rejection of miracles: it consists in the rejection of idolatry. Any teacher becomes an idol the moment men believe things merely because he said them, instead of believing in him because of the inherent truth and worth of the things he said. If you believe, for example, in the principle of human brotherhood because Christ taught it, you are an idolater; but if you believe in Christ because he taught brotherhood, which you accept on independent grounds of reason and conscience, your veneration for him is morally and rationally legitimate. So that, from the standpoint of the religion of experience, the only question is whether we have in the words of Jesus some real contribution of wisdom and insight which we do not get so convincingly or so finely put from other teachers.

It is this circumstance which renders so essentially irrelevant the logomachy over the historicity of Jesus. The teaching of the Gospels is what it is, from whomsoever it may come. Our estimate of the teacher is dependent upon the value of the teaching, not *vice versâ*. To say that it comes not from Jesus, but from anonymous disciples of one who never lived, is rather more idle

than the dictum of the schoolboy, that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written not by Homer, but by another poet of the same name.

Now there is in the recorded utterances of Jesus one element about which the new mythological school is for the most part significantly silent. I refer to the Parables. The specifically ethical maxims of Jesus are not induplicable; all, or almost all, of them can be found in earlier writings, Jewish and Gentile. This is not remarkable, even if Buckle be not wholly right in his contention that there are no discoveries in morals. But where are we to look for anticipations of the form, the contents, and the deep humanistic insight of the Parables of Jesus? To their literary excellence I shall quote, instead of using poorer words of my own, the following eloquent testimony of Professor Nathaniel Schmidt:—

In one province of art Jesus was a master. No man ever spoke as he. The beauty of his speech was as marked as its originality. Even the handful of fragments that has come down to us gives an impression of his extraordinary power. Though Oriental oratory abounds in figurative language and illustrative anecdote, and volumes of wise sayings prized "as apples of gold in baskets of silver" have been preserved from Hebrew antiquity, there is nothing that even approaches the parable of Jesus. It has the excellence that forbids imitation. There are works of art so perfect in their kind that the world instinctively leaves the sacred ground pre-empted by genius for other fields of endeavour. The beauty of nature impressed itself upon the sensitive mind of Jesus, and was reflected in the simplicity and grandeur, the harmony and radiance, of his speech. Each work of art in the Galilean master's gallery stands forth in maiden purity, chaste, modest and unconscious of its loveliness, yet breathes the breath of

life. These characters of his creation will live as long as the human race. Churches may rise and fall, theological systems may come and go, works of great merit may be dropped into the limbo of forgotten things, but the love of inspiring art will itself secure against oblivion the Good Samaritan, Dives and Lazarus, the Foolish Virgins, the Prodigal Son, the Sower, the Widow, the Shepherd, and their companions. Jesus may have known next to nothing of sculpture and painting, of music and drama, and may have had no idea of their place in the moral and spiritual development of man; but he knew as few know the art of touching all the chords that vibrate within the soul, the emotions, the will and the mind, and to lift and refine whenever he touched them.[1]

The parables of Jesus have suffered in a specially acute degree from the general neglect into which the Bible has fallen. More than any other part of the New Testament (except perhaps the Apocalypse), they have been the hunting-ground for wild and fantastic exegesis. They have been converted, as Professor Jülicher [2] pithily expresses it, from *Gleichnissreden* into allegories. Esoteric meanings have been vainly sought in every item of the imagery,—in the ring, the shoe, the lamp, the talent. St. Augustine, though not perhaps one of the worst sinners in this respect, is yet responsible for the use of the phrase "Compel them to come in," taken from the parable of the Banquet, as a justification for religious persecution. So preposterously has the evident sense and the literary structure of the parables been distorted, to force them to yield meanings of which their author cannot have dreamed, that one is bound to sympathize with the legendary schoolboy, who, having been taught that a parable is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning,"

[1] Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 362–63. [2] Art. *Parables* in *Ency. Bib.*

inverted the definition in his examination paper, and declared that a parable is a heavenly story with no earthly meaning. The follies of commentators, however, cannot justly be visited upon the head of Jesus, any more than in the case of any other poet. The cure for false theology, said Emerson, is mother-wit; and the cure for pedantic absurdities of interpretation is a re-examination of the texts in the light of common sense and literary insight.

The parable form is not peculiar to the New Testament. There are several examples of it in the Old Testament, one of which (the homily read by Nathan to David in II Samuel xii, 1–7) is as fine and apt as anything in the Gospels. But whereas the parable is rare and exceptional in the older scriptures, in the Gospels it is usual and frequent. It is there that we find ascribed to Jesus those masterpieces which, as Schmidt says, forbid imitation.

The first problem that confronts us when we begin to study the use of the parable by Jesus is the question of the secrecy of his teaching. This, as we have noted above, is the thesis of Mark. The deliverances of that evangelist are somewhat incoherent, both among themselves and as compared with the testimony of the other Gospels. Mark iv, 10–13, reads as follows:

(10) And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parables. (11) And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: (12) that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them. (13) And he saith unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how shall ye know all the parables?

Verses 11 and 12, with their bitter cynicism, are presumably a later insertion, since verse 13 follows naturally after verse 10. Moreover, these two added verses are flatly incongruous with verses 21–24 of the same chapter, and more particularly with verses 33 and 34, which give the following humane and common-sense explanation of the use of parables:

> And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it: and without a parable spake he not unto them: but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things.

The same explanation is given also in Matt. xiii, 13:

> Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

The question, however, is again complicated by the citation from Isaiah in verses 14 ff.

Here, then, we have two explanations;—the one, that Jesus taught in parables because without them the multitude could not understand; the other, that he used the parables in order to prevent them from understanding him. This is a charming problem, over which the harmonizers and reconcilers may quarrel till doomsday. The higher critics as a rule assume that the two traditions are mutually exclusive. We may readily agree with them that Jesus cannot be correctly reported in this particular place both by Matthew and Mark. It certainly is not conceivable that he can have said both these things at the same time, in reply to questions from his disciples about the parable of the Sower.

We ought, however, to remember that every man says

conflicting things upon different occasions, and that each of two assertions which are incompatible with each other may be consistent with the special circumstances of the moment at which it is uttered. Everything we say presupposes a huge context of things which we do not say, but which, being understood and taken for granted by our companions, provides the necessary light for the interpretation of our words. If isolated fragments of the conversation of any man were jotted down in different years and afterwards juxtaposed by some clumsy redactor, a thousand seeming inconsistencies could not fail to arise. So it well may be that Jesus at different times adopted different courses. One cannot believe, indeed, that he resorted to the trick of systematically dividing his teaching into exoteric and esoteric; but there are traces of a growing conflict between him and the religious and political authorities of his nation, which may at times have forced upon him a device to which every propagandist is sometimes compelled to resort,—that, namely, of using language which would convey his meaning to the initiated and to sympathizers, while concealing it from hostile outsiders.

Jesus evidently foresaw the fact that his work would some day bring him into collision with the ruling powers. He was no revolutionist in the vulgar sense,—no claptrap Messiah seeking to establish a petty kingdom in place of the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire. He was, however, a propagandist of ethical and social principles calculated to produce disturbance within any existing system of government, civil or religious. To demand social righteousness is more menacing than to seek to substitute monarchy for imperialism, or republicanism for monarchy. To insist upon the cleansing of the inside

of the cup is more far-reaching than to change a king into a president, or a priest into a minister. There is considerable uncertainty as to the exact shape which the idea of the kingdom of God took in the mind of Jesus.[1] Nobody but a pedant can pretend to give a detailed chart of the order of society which would come about through the adoption of just principles. But that Jesus became early suspected of revolutionary designs is made clear, among other things, by the entrapping questions occasionally put to him. And that he saw through the wiles of his enemies is shown by the evasive answers he returned. For example, when priests and scribes inquire as to the authority by which he taught and laboured, he replies by asking them a question concerning the credentials of John the Baptist, which they dare not answer.[2] And again, when certain politicians seek to embroil him either with the people or with the Roman authorities by a trick question about the lawfulness of paying tribute to

[1] Considerations of space, as well as of subject-matter, constrain me to omit the discussion of the now fashionable theory of "thoroughgoing eschatology," set forth in many recent works, and with special freshness and ability by Albert Schweitzer, in *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* and *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*. Readers familiar with the controversy will agree, I think, that the arguments in the text do not depend for their validity upon the determination of the eschatological issue.

[2] Mk. xi, 27–33, R. V.: "And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders; and they said unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? or who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus said unto them, I will ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But should we say, From men—they feared the people: for all verily held John to be a prophet. And they answered Jesus and say, We know not. And Jesus saith unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

Cæsar, he replies with an oracular dictum that reminds one of Captain Jack Bunsby.[1]

Professor Jülicher opposes to the secrecy theory the alleged fact that a great body of the teaching of Jesus addressed to the multitudes is non-parabolic, instancing especially the long passage, Matt. v, 1–vii, 27. Here, however, arises one of the most interesting of all the problems connected with the teaching of Jesus. This long passage is introduced with the statement that the teaching it contains was addressed exclusively to the immediate disciples.[2] Unfortunately, the evangelist creates a problem for us by informing us (vii, 28) that "When Jesus had finished these words, *the multitudes* were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Here we have another splendid file for the harmonizers to break their teeth upon.

The dilemma is presented over again in the corresponding passage of St. Luke. That Gospel informs us (vi, 20) that "He lifted up his eyes on *his disciples*, and said"—

[1] Mk. xii, 13–17, R. V.: "And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in talk. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they marvelled greatly at him."

[2] Matt. v, 1: "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, *his disciples* came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught *them*, saying," etc. The plain implication is that he had climbed the hill to escape from the crowds which had followed him from Galilee, Decapolis, and elsewhere. (See the preceding verses.)

all that follows down to verse 49. Then it is straightway added: "After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of *the people,* he entered into Capernaum."

It is palpable that the teaching in Matthew which begins with the Beatitudes and continues for three whole chapters was never given consecutively as a sermon. No teacher would utter seriatim, without comment or connecting words, such a series of quintessential maxims and epigrams. They epitomize the reflection and the garnered wisdom of a lifetime. Many of them, too, are old sayings, earlier versions of which have been traced,—for example, in one of the recently recovered translations of the Book of Enoch. On grounds of general probability we may infer that much of this teaching was voiced by Jesus both publicly to the multitude and privately to his immediate coadjutors, but also that much of it was given to the latter alone. The comparison between his auditors and the persecuted prophets,[1] for instance, is enormously more appropriate as addressed to a select group of co-workers than to the indiscriminate crowd. The characterization, again, of those addressed as the salt of the earth [2] is practically impossible as applied to a promiscuous assembly, containing enemies as well as friends.

Again, there is much in the so-called Sermon which seems fanatical and impracticable if construed as counsel to ordinary men for the guidance of ordinary life, but which is emphatically wise and appropriate as a code for the conduct of missionaries of an unpopular cause, likely to encounter persecution.[3] Non-resistance as a maxim

[1] Matt. v, 11–12. [2] Matt. v, 13.

[3] *E. g.,* Matt. v, 38–48, containing the doctrine of non-resistance, the command to turn the other cheek, to give the cloak to him who takes the coat, etc.

for the laity would make life impossible. It would enable the masterful to inherit the earth, and lead to bitter enslavement for all but a handful of mankind. Yet this very attitude is that which makes the martyr invulnerable, and gives to the prophet of spiritual reformation an irresistible authority. There is nothing in the career of Jesus consistent with the notion that he was a sentimental fanatic of the Tolstoian type. He was quite ready both to denounce judgment upon evildoers and to resort to the use of force when the matter in dispute was not a personal one.[1] He would not, however, seek to avenge by violence any insult or injury to himself. It seems, then, not altogether arbitrary to suggest that this much-criticized teaching of non-resistance was part of the special instruction given by Jesus to the disseminators of his message, with a view to those peculiar exigencies of their task to which it is admirably adapted. Such an interpretation accords at least as well with the context of the Gospels as the contrary one; and it has the advantage of rescuing Jesus from the imputation (so inconsistent, as we shall see, with the rest of his teaching) of being a kind of Sunday-school milksop.

Returning to the question of secrecy, we may note the objection, based on Matt. xxi, 45, that the Pharisees who had overheard the parable of the Vineyard understood it, and saw that it was meant for them. I would repeat, however, that it does not follow from this that Jesus never desired to conceal his meaning. His fondness for the aphorism, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," suggests an acute and almost humorous sense of the differences of capacity among his auditors. He knew by close observation how self-centredness and self-deification

[1] Matt. xxi, 12 ff., Mark xi, 15 ff., John ii, 14 ff.

render the perception obtuse. His own familiar friends were sadly impenetrable, and he often resents the necessity of laboriously explaining to them things that should have been self-evident.[1] It is obvious that he often suffered, as would any poet whose figurative speech was taken literally; and it well may be that weariness of this sometimes led him to say, not without irritation, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

A remarkable analogy exists between the parables of Christ and the ancient folk-lore fables which we associate with the name of Æsop. These illustrate exactly that combination of secrecy and openness which we find in the tales of Jesus. It has sometimes seemed to me that the only people who can suppose Æsop's fables to be fit reading for young children are those who having eyes see not, and having ears fail to hear. For these fables mask under their delightful imagery all the bitter and tragic resentment of the poor and enslaved against the rich and prosperous. The cunning they commend is a cynical crystallization of the lesson taught by cruel experience of the inhumanity of the "haves" to the "have-nots." The earthen pot floating down the stream must avoid the brass pot, for, if the two collide, the earthen pot will be shattered to fragments. The earthen pot is the poor man; he must avoid the society of the rich and powerful. Such is also the half-concealed meaning of the stories of the wolf and the lamb, the fox and the goat. Æsop warns the poor and the enslaved to be on their guard against the blandishments and the heartless deceits of the rich and free.

[1] Matt. xv, 15 ff.; xvi, 9 ff.; Mark viii, 16 ff. The characterization of his followers as "babes" (Matt. xi, 25), if authentic, is another evidence of his sense of the situation.

One great group of the parables of Jesus is in like manner addressed to the poor and oppressed. These parables are not bitterly cynical like the fables of Æsop, and they do not convey a sense of hopelessness and helplessness, like that which breathes through the fable of the earthen pot. They are rather an appeal to self-reliance and co-operation, implying a confident consciousness that by these means the blessings of which the poor and outcast are deprived could be won.

There is in the sayings of Jesus a realistic sense of the actual conditions of life, which for his time, and in view of his circumstances, is amazingly original. He insists that people seeking any sort of advancement in life must rely upon themselves, and not trust to outside powers. He repeatedly emphasizes that doctrine of the moral indifference of nature which, as presented by thinkers in the nineteenth century, has been denounced as atheistic. He points to the fact that the sun shines impartially on the just and the unjust, and the rain falls alike on the evil and on the good. There is a favourite saying of his which in the three Synoptics is repeated five times over,[1] a fact which justifies the inference that it was a characteristic maxim, repeated many more than five times by Jesus. This is the saying, rendered with slight differences of wording: "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath." There could not be a more perfect summary of the doctrine familiarly known to us as the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest.

The denial of special providences, conveyed by the aphorism about the sun and the rain, is repeated very em-

[1] Matt. xiii, 13, xxv, 29 (Parable of Talents), Mark iv, 25, Luke viii, 18, xix, 26.

phatically in Luke xiii, 1–5, in which Jesus declares that victims of a barbarous sentence and a tragic accident were not thereby proved to be worse sinners than their neighbours. This is a stinging rebuke to the towering egotism which imagines that the order of the universe is interrupted to inflict exemplary punishment upon wrongdoers or bestow palmary rewards upon individuals of exceptional piety. Jesus is almost as satirical as Hotspur to the braggart Glendower.[1]

In studying the parables of Jesus, then, we must begin by clearing our minds of the Sunday-school notion of the man whose teaching lies before us. He is not a sentimentalist, not a dreamer; not a bloodless phantasm, such as he is made to look in many of the old pictures. Neither is he a pedantic theologian, bent on forcing the facts of life to fit some preconceived theory. Rather, he is at once a poet and a reformer. He is "that most formidable of all combinations, a mystic and a man of action." He has, indeed, a serene and imperturbable faith in the ultimate rightness of things. His confidence that the universe is sound at heart reposes upon the mystic intuition that the disinterested and super-personal will in himself is identical with the innermost core of the world. But this intuition,—which is in truth the working faith of all reformers and martyrs,—is consistent with the clearest and most unilluded perception of the obstacles

[1] *King Henry IV*, Part I, Act iii, Scene i:

Glendower: At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes
Of burning cressets; and at my birth
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward.

Hotspur: Why, so it would have done at the same season, if your mother's cat had but kitten'd, though yourself had never been born.

and resistances to righteousness opposed not only by the outer world, but also by the self-regarding will of men and women, and especially of the masters of things as they are. Jesus feels that most of the evils suffered by the poor and the oppressed are due to their own apathy, and to their neglect of the irresistible power which they unitedly could exercise.

His call to them is, accordingly, a challenge to alertness and efficiency. It is perhaps not surprising that the old doctrinal interpretation assigned fantastic theological meanings to these parables, for their lesson is not, in the ordinary narrow sense, an ethical one. In the parable of the Tares,[1] of the Thief,[2] of the Hidden Treasure,[3] of the Pearl,[4] of the Lost Sheep,[5] as well as in the longer stories of the Talents,[6] the Ten Virgins,[7] and the Wedding Garment,[8] we have no neat little examples of "material for moral instruction," with the moral symmetrically nailed on at the end, but vivid hints of the hard and brutal reality that confronts men,—especially those men who seek the good. These parables all centre in the idea that many are called and few chosen, and that the prize of success in any undertaking goes only to him that hath—to him, that is, who is endowed with that minimum of advantages which enables him to cope successfully with his environment.

The most sensational instance of this ruthless realism is afforded by the parable of the Unjust Steward, which has always been a stumbling-block to commentators. The version we have of it (Luke xvi, 1–13) has evidently been

[1] Matt. xiii, 24–30.
[2] Matt. xxiv, 43.
[3] Matt. xiii, 44.
[4] Matt. xiii, 45–46.
[5] Matt. xviii, 12.
[6] Matt. xxv, 14–30.
[7] Matt. xxv, 1–13.
[8] Matt. xxii, 1–14.

worked over from verse 10 onwards by puzzled theologians, who could not edit away its apparent meaning, and yet were aghast at it. In that story a thief is commended,—not, indeed, for his theft, but for his alertness and skill in adapting his circumstances to his needs.

This is but an exceptionally glaring proof of my contention as to the meaning of the series of stories which I shall venture to call the Efficiency Parables. These have nothing whatever to do with salvation in a life after death, with correctness of theological belief, or even with moral character, in the ordinary and limited sense of that phrase. The five foolish virgins are not represented as believing more or less than the wise, or as being morally inferior to them. Their folly consists in their unreadiness, their failure to prepare for the call of opportunity or to anticipate the circumstances with which they will have to cope. The unjust steward is commended, "because he had done wisely: *for the sons of this age are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.*"

Jesus, like every practical reformer, encountered the disheartening fact that good people are often good for nothing. They are ineffectual; they sit apathetically waiting for the law of righteousness to execute itself. They will not combine with others, they will not organize the forces in men and things which must be marshalled before victory can be attained. The sons of this age are indeed wiser. Who that has sought to overthrow any concrete evil has not learned to wonder at and to respect the never-sleeping vigilance of those who, profiting by the evil, desire its continuance? The white slave traffic, the liquor interest, the exploiters of child labour, the capitalistic opposers of the just claims of the working-

class,—all these seem to be hydra-headed and argus-eyed. No chance for a successful *coup* ever eludes them. Their grasp is upon all our political and municipal machinery. Their emissaries are to be found at every strategical point. If at long intervals the far more numerous forces of good are successfully organized against them, they know that they have but to bide their time until the next election, or the next lock-out, meantime judiciously distributing backsheesh and raising sham issues to divert the public attention from themselves and their designs.

This, then, is the excellent foppery of the world,—that they who believe in the good leave it to come of itself, superstitiously trusting the blind forces of nature to give them a victory they "have done naught to earn"; whereas all the powers of darkness, with perception sharpened by self-interest, count upon no effect unless they have with deadly efficiency marshalled the natural causes that cannot fail to bring it about. The lesson that Jesus read to his contemporaries has to be learned over again, in sorrow and disillusionment, by the reformers of every new generation.

But Jesus, as I have said, is as little a pessimist as he is a sentimental optimist. He sees where the strength of evil lies,—in the never-wearying vigilance of those who make evil their good. But he also sees that the forces of the world are ready to wait upon the will of those who seek justice and righteousness, as soon as they comply with the conditions that inhere in the eternal order of things.

We miss the whole point of the great parable of the Talents if we fail to see that its lesson is for the man with the one talent. The reason, says Jesus in effect,

why the world is governed by a haughty and brutal aristocracy in Church and State, is not because that aristocracy consists of persons whose ability is to that of average mankind as five to one or as two to one. It is simply because the mass fails to make use of such natural endowments as it does possess. This is the secret of democracy, which consists essentially in an appeal to the uncommon possibilities of the common man. The preaching of the will to power as a doctrine for aristocrats and supermen is from this point of view a serious mistake, for it may perchance be overheard by the commonalty. When the poorly gifted realize that ten men possessing one talent each are stronger than any one man with five talents, we may see a democratic assertion of the will to power, which will make a compendious end of all the tyrannies, religious, political and economic, under which the race is as yet groaning. What is the whole organization of the proletariat in our modern nations, the formation of labour unions and socialist political parties, but a seizing upon the lesson taught to the have-nots and the outcasts nineteen centuries ago by the proletarian Founder of the Christian Church? In any nation, the latent power of the oppressed majority is necessarily greater than that of the oppressing minority. In this ultimate sense it may be said that every people gets the government it deserves. But commonly the majority sleeps or permits itself to be blinded to its true interests by the crafts and wiles of its exploiters. Yet even to-day the great awakening is in process. Everywhere the man with the one talent is unwrapping it from the napkin in which he had hidden it in the earth, and is pooling it with the single talents of his neighbours. The triumph of democracy throughout the world which will

thus be brought about will be one expression of the triumph of Jesus Christ; for it will be effected by an application of his teaching.

It is to be noted that when Jesus recognizes the moral indifference of nature, he passes no ethical judgment upon the law that he detects. He merely states the fact, without pausing to justify or condemn it. The sun, he tells us, shines on the just and the unjust; the rain falls upon the evil and upon the good. To him that hath shall be given; therefore (he implies), see that you have, in order that you may have more. He does not say that this law of nature is ideally just. He leaves open the question whether the world-order may not be anti-human and inhuman. Like a modern man of science, he seeks to define precisely the conditions under which the game of life must be played. He denies utterly the naïve moral theology of the early Jews, who thought that compliance with the law of righteousness on the part of individuals was an infallible means to success. He would have laughed to scorn that childlike psalmist who said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." [1] Such a doctrine he would rightly have regarded as the essence of superstition. Matthew Arnold has put the truth into lines that seem but a paraphrase of the words of Jesus:—

Streams will not curb their pride
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightnings go aside
To leave his virtues room;
Nor is that wind less rough that blows a good man's barge.

[1] Ps. xxxvii, 25.

Nature, with equal mind,
Sees all her sons at play,—
Sees man control the wind,
The wind sweep man away,—
Allows the proudly riding and the foundering bark.[1]

This is a stern teaching; yet the truth, however rigorous it seem, is more precious than any flattering illusion. Nobody will discuss whether the outward order of things is moral or immoral, unless he is still slumbering in the dreamland of anthropomorphism. If we read the order of laws and events in the world as the expression of a personal will, we shall have to appraise it in ethical terms. We then shall find ourselves involved in perpetual doubt as to whether the will it expresses is divine or diabolical. We cut away the ground, however, from this idle controversy by recognizing the impersonality, and consequently the non-morality, of the outward order of things. The world with its laws is neither moral nor immoral, and places no handicap either upon morality or immorality. The only valid faith is that which accepts this fact, and does not try to blink it or to soften the harshness of its implications.

But it is precisely this indifference, this impartiality, of the universe, which gives the opportunity for the ethical will to embody itself. If nature were anti-moral, if the dice were loaded in favour of evil, the cause of righteousness would be foredoomed to failure. If, on the other hand, the world-order foreordained the victory of right, then right would be but another name for cunning prudence and self-interest, and the nobility of virtue would surcease. Because nature is impartial, the re-

[1] Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna.*

sponsibility lies upon man to create the righteous order that he dreams of, and, in labouring for it, to create himself into something nobler than his original condition.

Alongside of the group of stories which preach the doctrine I have just elaborated, and which I have called for convenience the Efficiency Parables, lies another series, which may be termed for distinction the Ethical Parables. Under this heading fall all those beautiful tales preserved in Luke, but omitted from Matthew because, as we have seen, they preach a universalist doctrine to which that evangelist was opposed. It was early believed that such characters as Lazarus and the Prodigal Son represented the Gentile nations, the Rich Man of the Lazarus story and the Elder Brother of the Prodigal standing for the Jews. If this interpretation rightly seizes the thought of the narrator, it only throws into a still finer light the marvellous art of the characterization. In the case of the story of the Good Samaritan, there can be no question whatever as to the purport. The greater nobility of the despised foreigner is thrust into the teeth of the narrow and race-proud Jew, and the ancient doctrine of duty to one's neighbour undergoes a broadening which at one stroke purges it of hateful exclusiveness.

The literature of the world does not contain the artistic equal of the tale of the Prodigal Son. In twenty-two short verses are presented to us three perfectly depicted and marvellously contrasted types of character. Many conventional valuations are revalued in the pure white light of its ethical vision. With what skill is brought out the inward vileness of the respectable elder brother, whose ungenerous spirit cared only for favours received, and meted out its curmudgeonly loyalty in

strict proportion to the amount of its rewards! How finely is this contrasted with the open-hearted generosity of the father,—willing, indeed, to let the wayward child dree his weird; resigned, though with grief, to the inevitableness of the bitter price he must pay for his experience; but ready to pour out his unstinted benevolence the moment there is any expression of penitence on the prodigal's part.

The inner secret of the democratic faith of Jesus, however, is his recognition of the hidden fineness even of vile persons. The blackguard prodigal had indeed been basely ungrateful to his father, and had devoured that father's living with harlots. Yet he it is who exhibits a truly magnificent gleam of character the moment he *comes to himself*. The faith of democracy is that the real self, to which any man comes when his eyes are truly opened and he sees realities as they are, is always a noble and splendid self, capable of all justice, of every generosity and every renunciation. This is the self which in the prodigal rises to the height of the sentiment, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants." It is the same self which in the father overflows in the generosity that gives to the returned wanderer the best robe, places the ring on his finger and the shoes on his feet, and kills for him the fatted calf; the same which, in the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, gives magnanimously "unto this last" even as unto those who have toiled all the day: taking their need, not their desert, as the measure of what they are to receive.

In the literary miracle of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, this conviction of the inherent fineness

of humanity blasts the dark idolatry of self in the irreproachable religious leader with the same lightning that reveals the unsuspected nobility of the publican. Jesus does not need to preach or moralize—he can destroy with description and create with disclosure. Nor can we cease to wonder at the utter freedom from sentimentality which takes for its example not a character that is falsely condemned by conventional standards, but one that is truly censurable according to genuinely ethical canons. The publican, who for hire had made himself the instrument of foreign tyranny over his compatriots, and who had swindled both his employers and his victims into the bargain, is a man whom every disinterested onlooker would rightly dislike. Yet, according to Jesus, when even *he* comes to his true self, he finds that it is a self which condemns his record. By uttering the prayer "God be merciful to me a sinner," the publican identifies himself with the justice whose verdict is against him.

Emerson held the conviction that Jesus was the only man in all history who had justly estimated the greatness of man.[1] This tribute to the Galilean has been condemned as sentimental. In associating myself with it, I would ask the critics how otherwise they can explain the facts to which I have pointed. Here *is* the insight that pierces through the rags and the vileness to the hidden royalty. We do not read it into the Gospels; there it is: and where else shall we find it? Not in the aristocratic satires of Plato upon democracy; not in Aristotle's acceptance of slavery as a part of the order of nature; not in the Buddhist condemnation of all individualized existence as an incurable evil to be fled from; not in the

[1] Divinity College Address. Concord edit. of Emerson, vol. i, p. 128. (Houghton, Mifflin.)

abstract and theoretical humanitarianism of the Roman jurists. This is an original contribution by Jesus to the moral insight of the world. In the light of it, and by virtue of our grudging and partial acceptance of it, democracies have at last begun to exist, slavery is beginning to be abolished in fact as well as name, and the moral personality of woman to be recognized in law and social institutions.

Consistent with this doctrine of the greatness of man is the teaching of Jesus that the institution of the sabbath, like all the rest of the machinery of religion, existed for man's sake, that man was lord of it and could dispense himself from the observance of its regulations whenever this was contrary to its main end. I need not repeat the argument briefly outlined in Chapter II,[1] tending to show that the words "The son of man is lord also of the sabbath," mean "Man is lord of the sabbath."

It is from such fragmentary teachings (which cannot have been invented by men who believed the contrary) that one gradually discerns the true lineaments of the founder of Christianity. By his immediate followers he was misunderstood, and the misunderstanding grew wider and deeper in the ages that followed. Only by means of a minute analysis of the ancient record and a close discrimination between its parts can any vision of the truth now be attained. The critical principle, however, by which this procedure is justified is a simple one, and one that cannot, I think, be invalidated: Search your evangelist to find out what special axe he wishes to grind. Having done this, examine all the sayings he records which are flatly contradictory of the theory he is seeking to prove. You then may know with certainty that he

[1] *Ante*, p. 19, *note*.

did not invent these, and that the tradition affirming their authenticity must in his time have been so well established that he dared not defy it by modifying them.

One of the most interesting of these indisputably authentic traditions is the saying ascribed by Mark and Luke to Jesus in reply to the question of the rich young man, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus replies, "Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God." So the incident is introduced by Mark, who at this point is accurately followed by Luke.[1] Now there is no possibility of interpreting the reply of Jesus otherwise than as a repudiation of the epithet "good," on the ground that he was not God, and consequently had no right to be invested with the attributes of God. One ancient authority reads, "Call thou not me good"; and this is the unmistakable meaning of the answer as given by Mark and Luke. That these words were from a very early period felt by the Church to be a stumbling-block is evidenced by the utter distortion which they have received in the first Gospel. Matthew or some later scribe has, with perverse ingenuity, worked over the question and answer as follows:

> And behold, one came to him and said, Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments.[2]

This Matthæan adaptation, which makes both the questions childish, is an example of the clumsiness with

[1] Mark x, 17 ff., Luke xviii, 18 ff. [2] Matt. xix, 16–17.

which it was sometimes attempted to force the early tradition into conformity with later doctrinal developments. The fourth Gospel, it need scarcely be said, omits the incident altogether; and indeed it is remarkable that the original form should have been preserved in the second and third Gospels. The manly modesty it displays on the part of Jesus is as incompatible with the notion that he claimed to be the Jewish Messiah as with the idea that he was consciously an incarnation of the personal creator of the world. Modesty does not demand that a man shall disclaim characteristics essential to the office that he bears. For example, one would not expect an attorney-general to say, "Do not call me a lawyer." It would have been just such bathos for one claiming Jewish Messiahship to say, "Why callest thou me good?"

So obvious is the incongruity between this saying and the orthodox doctrine of Christ's divinity that I doubt whether any theologian has ever sought to grapple with it. It is the habit of paraphrasts and commentators to dodge the problem by palpable evasions or "wrestings of scripture." [1] Once, anxious to read orthodox expositions of this passage, I searched for hours in the London Library to find sermons on it. I hunted through hundreds of volumes, Catholic and Protestant, dating from the middle of the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth; but I could not find a single sermon on the text, "Why callest thou me good?" This is significant of the conspiracy of silence which has concealed the con-

[1] Witness the *suggestio falsi* in the scholium of Richard Baxter on Matt. xix, 17 (which in the version of 1611 had the same reading as at Mark x, 17): "Thou knowest not how great a word thou speakest of me, when thou callest me *Good: Goodness* is *God's* Name and *Attribute:* There is none *Essentially*, *Absolutely*, and *most perfectly Good* but *God*."—Baxter's *Paraphrase on the New Testament*, edition of 1701.

flict between the original tradition and the later doctrine of the Church.

That original tradition, as preserved in and capable of being extracted from the Synoptic Gospels, justifies the following conclusions:—

(1) That Jesus was not conscious of any difference of nature between himself and other men; he did not claim to be in any sense supernatural or supernormal.

(2) He was a free thinker, appealing away from prescription and authority to the independent moral judgment of every man. The working maxim of his life was, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

(3) Whatever may have been his power over nervous diseases and mental disturbances, he was no miracle-monger. "No sign," he emphatically said, "shall be given to this generation." By his own testimony, the cures that he effected were identical in kind with those performed by the ordinary Jewish exorcist.[1] The incredibility of the mass of the miracle stories is demonstrated by the fact that the effect of the reputation acquired by Jesus was to make his immediate relatives think him insane.[2] This is a curious impression to be produced by a man healing incurable diseases and restoring lunatics to sanity.

(4) Jesus was avowedly a disbeliever in special providences, and a believer in the doctrine of struggle for existence and survival by adaptation to environmental exigency.

(5) He was so far from believing (with St. Augustine

[1] Matt. xii, 27: "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, *by whom do your sons cast them out?* therefore shall they be your judges."

[2] Mark iii, 21: "And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself."

and the Church generally) in the total depravity of mankind and the necessity for miraculous regeneration, that he was for ever insisting on the inherent capacity of man himself to rise to the finest heights of character and the truest nobility of conduct.

(6) The doctrines of the Church concerning the unique nature and the supernatural functions of Jesus are demonstrably founded not upon the original tradition, but upon later accretions. This is especially the case in regard to the legends of his birth and resurrection.

Thus fundamentally different is the true Jesus from the Christ of ecclesiastical tradition. What then is to be his place in the religion of the present and the future? Are we to say, as so many are saying in effect, with the doctor in Tennyson's poem, "The good Lord Jesus has had his day"? Or may we endorse the reply of the nurse, "Had? Has it come? It has only dawned: it will come by and by." [1] Despite the necessary brevity of my treatment of the subject, I hope I have said enough to indicate and to justify my own conviction that the nurse's words are nearer to the truth than those of the *blasé* doctor. The coming of the day of Jesus will not be by the conversion of the world to the orthodox dogmas, but by a great ethical and spiritual renewal.

When men cease to follow blindly the dictates of custom and convention: when they are able to pierce through catchwords to realities: when they trust their independent moral judgment: when they see character and conduct as more real and important than the externals of life: when they are ready to live by and to die for their ideals: then his day will come.

[1] Tennyson, *In the Children's Hospital.*

When men forgive the injuries committed against them before presuming to ask forgiveness of their own offences: when the motive of personal gain has been transcended, and all men live for the sake of universal standards of justice, love and truth, and for the incarnation of these in the common life: when they combine the zest and spontaneity of childhood with the courageous wisdom of maturity: when they are efficiently and not idly good: then his day will come.

When, through the spread of knowledge and the purification of motives, there shall cease to be occasion for divorce: when there is victory over lust and unchaste desire: when every life that comes into the world is certain to be welcomed, loved, cherished and respected: when there is neither asceticism nor excess in eating and drinking: when class prejudice and race distinctions and all uncharitableness are done away: then his day will come.

When men become so fine in their moral quality that their very presence puts evildoers to shame (as Jesus put to shame the stony-hearted pedants who sought his judgment on the woman taken in sin): when we have the authentic sign of godship that he displayed—the power to quicken by our personal radiance the spiritual life in others: then his day will come.

When priests no longer pervert his teaching and insult humanity by declaring it impotent to save itself, and by pretending through magic to secure to men pardon and strength from an outside God: then his day will come.

When monarchies and aristocracies, and all laws and ordinances inconsistent with the sovereignty of the people, are done away; when poverty and wealth no longer militate against the exercise of those powers of

service to the good of all through which alone men can find their personal salvation: then his day will come.

When perfect law secures perfect liberty: when every man is a light to himself and an inspiration to others: then his day will come.

In the measure in which Christianity succeeded, it deserved to succeed, because its founder had made an original and indispensable contribution to the spiritual treasure of humanity. Not that the Christian message alone is sufficient for our salvation. At vital points it needs to be supplemented by the wisdom and insight of other teachers, whom future piety will unquestionably place on the same plane with the prophet of Nazareth. Jesus is unique only in the sense in which every individual is unique. Each man represents an unprecedented and induplicable synthesis of the elements of personality. The claim that Jesus was different in kind from the rest of the human race will be abandoned. But its abandonment is a gain and not a loss, since the maintenance of the claim is less of an honour to him than a depressing and discouraging depreciation of humanity. It is a gain to realize that what this man was and did is an expression of what is possible for other men, without miraculous or supernatural aid. By every shining example of what man has achieved, men are challenged to an emulation which calls into action their highest powers. They are crushed, however, and robbed of the most effectual incentive to self-regeneration, by the doctrine that true goodness and true wisdom are alien to human nature and can only be injected into it from without by a special operation of transcendent grace. If Jesus was right in that interpretation of humanity which he set forth in his tales of the Publican and the Prodigal Son, we need no myths and

legends to account for the manifestation of goodness and greatness by human beings, since these are the attributes of every man's true self. Rather, as I have elsewhere remarked, it is declensions from this standard that need to be accounted for.[1]

The piety which is consistent with free rationality and with the moral autonomy of mankind, will not seek to express its reverence for Jesus by imitation of the outward incidents of his career. The notion of "the imitation of Christ" has in it something of slavishness. The worthy following of any great leader consists in acting from his principles and in his spirit; and, as we have seen, the cardinal principle with Jesus was the defiance of precedent and the bringing of independent and untrammelled moral judgment to bear upon the circumstances that confronted him. He acted instinctively upon Kant's principle, that "Imitation has no place in morals." We can never transcend his rule of mutuality and his reverence for the unconditional worth of every human soul. But, seeing that the circumstances in which ethical principles have to be applied are always different, we may not govern the moral life by precedent. If we do, we fall short both of the demand of conscience and of the example of Jesus. Since he imitated nobody, the only true loyalty to him is to be original and to abstain from imitating even him. We must not abdicate the sovereignty that he ascribes to us in bidding us judge for ourselves what is right. The ordinary Christian practice of looking *to* Jesus is inconsistent with this demand. Rather we should look *with* him, first to the sources of spiritual strength and moral insight, and then at the world of facts, which challenges us to redemptive labour by reason of its

[1] See my *Criticisms of Life*, p. 157. (Houghton, Mifflin: 1915.)

clash with those righteous laws which are the structural principles of our nature.

The true resurrection of Jesus consists in the appropriation of his long-forgotten spirit and principles. Just as the spirit of Aristotle has risen again from the dead in the minds and wills, the purpose and method of our modern men of science, so that of Jesus is rising again among those who are seeking to establish a reign of righteousness based on the principles of democracy and freedom of thought. This is the real meaning of the hackneyed saying that there is more true Christianity outside the Churches than within them. Within the Churches we too often find the very temper against which his life was a protest: the temper of authoritarianism, of distrust of human nature, and of superstitious faith in the overruling of the natural order to moral ends by a power external to humanity. Yet even into the Churches the spirit of Jesus, risen again in the innovators, the free thinkers, and the social idealists of the modern world, is returning. Thus we look not in vain for the resurrection of the dead, and for the life of the world to come—by virtue of that resurrection. It is in the very spirit of Jesus that the trammels of the enslaving doctrine which has hitherto borne his name are being burst. The world is reaching forward to a new religious synthesis, in which, for the first time, the life-giving principles which he taught will bear their legitimate fruits, and demonstrate their affinity with the good which has come to us through other movements of the human spirit than that which originated with him.

CHAPTER V

THE RESURRECTION OF SOCRATES

In the preceding chapters I have advanced the view that one of the chief developments of religion will consist in placing other personalities on the plane with Jesus Christ. This does not mean that he will be relegated from the first place to an inferior one, but it does mean that he will cease to be regarded as the monopolist of the supreme religious function of saviour. I would not seek to disguise from the reader how intensely radical is the revolution involved in this change of attitude. As compared with it, all the modifications introduced of late years into the Churches are insignificant. Theological liberalism has thus far consisted in the abandonment of a number of dogmas and in a freer interpretation of those retained; but not in any Church has there yet been a conscious and deliberate placing of other men in the same category with Jesus.

It has been maintained by some thinkers that the Church cannot evolve beyond the point of exclusive devotion to the personality of Christ. According to these critics, if the Church ceased to be Christocentric, it would lose its identity. This opinion seems to me groundless. I hold that the Church could modify its view of the nature and offices of Christ, and could come to regard human salvation as the work of many persons instead of one, without making such a breach with the past as to destroy its identity and continuity. Whether

it will be able in practice to effect this change remains to be seen. My present contention is that the change is desirable and theoretically possible. A nation does not lose its identity when it changes its form of government. It can swing from monarchy to republicanism, from aristocracy to democracy, and still remain the same nation, the same State. I maintain that in religion we can similarly change from the monarchical to the democratic conception of God; and it is precisely this change which is involved in extending the idea of salvation in such wise that not only one, but many persons shall be recognized as having made essential contributions to it.

While it will be hotly disputed whether others than Jesus Christ may be looked upon as saviours, it fortunately happens that we can agree as to what salvation is. It will be admitted that the saved man is he who has undergone an inward renewal of heart and will. The attainment of virtuous character and its expression in righteous conduct is salvation. The truly saved man is he who has lost his self-regarding life and has found a life that beats in unison with impersonal and universal good. He who no longer mistakes the material goods of the world, which are but means, for the end of life; he who lives in disinterested principles and benevolent purposes that embrace the entire life of the universe, is the man who has found salvation.

That this inward renewal is the essence of redemption will not be denied even by those who assert that the attainment of endless life and felicity is a necessary concomitant of the process. For that felicity itself is held to consist in the complete harmonization of the finite will of man with the infinite and perfectly good will of God. The anticipated happiness of the immortal life is a result of

salvation; but the salvation consists in something other than happiness. The beatified spirit is happy because it is saved, not saved because it is happy. The Christian idea is not merely hedonistic, however widespread may be the popular misunderstanding that regards it as such. Christ's purpose was to quicken in men a vital and original seed of the spiritual life, capable of fructifying in them and communicating itself from them to others. It is a vulgarization of this idea to represent it as designed merely to ensure happiness. Rather its purpose is to produce a loyalty and an enthusiasm which shall make men capable of forgoing happiness. The typical Christian is not the ecstatically happy Salvationist, but the martyr, whose spiritual life is so deep, so real, and so serene that he counts misery and frustration insignificant, and is willing to embrace the stake or the cross. To speak of him as happy involves a somewhat degrading use of that ambiguous term. He is fully conscious of the bitterness of the cup, which he prays may pass from him; but his salvation is testified by his willingness to drink it to the dregs.

It is further admitted on all hands that that qualitative change in which salvation consists may be undergone in the present life. Protestant Christianity, indeed, insists that it must be—that unless a man be saved on earth he is lost for ever. The Roman purgatorian doctrine, humaner in spirit, has been morally laxer in practice. Even it, however, fully admits the possibility of complete salvation during the earthly lifetime. By the consent, then, of all Christians, men are quickened here and now into that type of character which is the highest thing that could be attained even in an immortal existence. It is also conceded that the entire machinery of Chris-

tianity exists for the purpose of producing this effect in men. Must it not then be acknowledged that whoever contributes to this change any indispensable element is to that extent a saviour? If, independently of the Christian tradition, any man undergoes a transformation identical in its ethical results with that which Christianity effects, it cannot be denied that the change is a salvation, and the person responsible for it a saviour. Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other.

As one instance of the change of standpoint which I anticipate in religion, I shall outline here the new recognition which should be given to the personality and work of Socrates. My contention is that he has bequeathed to mankind a spirit and example, a "method and secret," which form a necessary part of human salvation. He stands for the elaborate development of a principle which is indeed embodied in the original Christian teaching, but which is there so little stressed that it has been possible for the historic religious bodies to ignore it and to act for centuries in defiance of it. That principle is intellectual honesty. Socrates lived and died for freedom and fulness of thought. He convicted men of intellectual sin, just as Jesus convicted them of moral sin. No less than Jesus, he considered himself the emissary of a power greater than himself; and he had the same high sense of responsibility for the sacred mission entrusted to him. Like Jesus, he lived in poverty, was condemned as a blasphemer, and died a martyr's death. His spirit, like that of Jesus, was speedily eclipsed, and is only now rising into newness of life.

The validity of his title to rank as a saviour is established, in the first place, by his effect upon the char-

acters of those with whom he was personally associated. Just as one cannot explain St. Paul without Jesus, so one cannot explain the reverence of Plato and Xenophon for Socrates without believing their accounts of his exalted character. The impression which he produced upon the greatest and ablest men of his time is unmistakable and immeasurable. It is further duplicated in the effect which to this day and to all future time he is capable of exercising upon all who come into contact with his spirit as it lives and communicates itself through the writings of Xenophon and Plato. No reader of the *Apology* can doubt the proud contention of Socrates, that instead of being a corrupter of young men, he had been the very opposite; he had saved many from corruption, and had been the only restraining influence upon some who, after leaving him, went to the bad. With Socrates as with Jesus, one feels that the spirit is greater than the letter, the life more than the doctrine. We are at once abashed and exalted by the spiritual grandeur of these men; what they are is more than what they say and do.

Of the life of Socrates we have more reliable details than in the case of Jesus. It is reasonably certain that he was born in the year 470 or 469 B. C., his father Sophroniscus being a sculptor, his mother Phænarete a midwife. Tradition has it that he worked at his father's trade, though there seems no reliable basis for the statement, made centuries later by Pausanias, that a group of the Graces at the entrance of the Acropolis was his handiwork. In the usual Athenian fashion he learned music, gymnastic, geometry, and astronomy. He was early familiar with the philosophy and the physical speculations current in his time, but he soon gave up the habit of guessing at the secrets of the external world,

since he considered self-knowledge of the first importance. He served as a soldier in three campaigns,—at Potidæa in the years from 432 to 429, at Delium in 424, and at Amphipolis in 422. Plato has recorded many anecdotes of his courage and his extraordinary physical hardihood.[1]

To his personal ugliness we have not only the witness of the traditional bust, but the anecdotes of his contemporaries [2] and his own witty references to himself. It seems probable that he was unhappily married, though the gossip about Xanthippe is unauthenticated. He believed himself to be divinely inspired. Many are the references to the "daimon" by which at all important crises of his life he was prompted. It is related that on one occasion he remained for twenty-four hours sunk in

[1] "We messed together, and I had the opportunity of observing his extraordinary power of sustaining fatigue and going without food when our supplies were intercepted in any place, as will happen with an army. In the faculty of endurance he was superior not only to me but to everybody; there was no one to be compared to him. Yet at a festival he was the only person who had any real powers of enjoyment, and though not willing to drink, he could if compelled beat us all at that; and the most wonderful thing of all was that no human being had ever seen Socrates drunk. . . . His endurance of cold was also surprising. There was a severe frost, for the winter in that region was really tremendous, and everybody else either remained indoors, or if they went out had on no end of clothing, and were well shod, and had their feet swathed in felts and fleeces: in the midst of this, Socrates, with his bare feet on the ice, and in his ordinary dress, marched better than any of the other soldiers who had their shoes on, and they looked daggers at him because he seemed to despise them."—Alcibiades, in the *Symposium*. See also *Apology* 28–29, *Laches* 181, and *Charmides* 1.

[2] "He is exactly like the masks of Silenus, which may be seen sitting in the statuaries' shops, having pipes and flutes in their mouths; and they are made to open in the middle, and there are images of gods inside them. I say also that he is like Marsyas the satyr. You will not deny, Socrates, that your face is like that of a satyr."—*Symposium* 215. See also the witty dialogue between Socrates and Critobulus in Xenophon's *Banquet*, § 5.

meditation and oblivious to the outer world.[1] In the closing portion of the speech at his trial he argues that his condemnation will certainly be a good, because the familiar oracle, which had often dissuaded him from some contemplated course, had set up no opposition to the very unconciliatory speech he had planned to make to his judges.[2]

Though he lived to be seventy years of age, there was to the end no decline in his extraordinary mental powers. How far the *Apology*, the *Crito* and the *Phaedo* are historical we cannot definitely say, but from the general correspondence between Plato's and Xenophon's accounts of the trial, it is clear that the *Apology* faithfully presents the main lines of his defence. The chief point of the *Crito* is in like manner borne out by Xenophon, who tells us that "when his friends would have withdrawn him privately, he would not consent, but asked them with a smile if they knew of any place beyond the borders of Attica where death could not approach him." Xenophon also relates another anecdote showing the imperturbable magnanimity with which Socrates met his fate:

> Apollodorus . . . said to him, "But it grieves me, Socrates, to have you die so unjustly." Socrates, with much tenderness, laying his hand upon his head, answered smiling, "What, my much-loved Apollodorus, would you rather they had condemned me justly?" [3]

[1] *Symposium* 220.

[2] "The oracle made no sign of opposition, either as I was leaving my house and going out in the morning, or when I was going up into this Court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching this matter has the oracle opposed me."—*Apology* 40.

[3] *The Defence of Socrates.*

Between the picture of Socrates by Xenophon and that by Plato there is a difference analogous to that which distinguishes the Synoptic from the Johannine picture of Jesus. Many of the Platonic Dialogues were written long years after the master's death, and into his mouth Plato has certainly put many expressions of his own maturer thought. Yet it cannot be doubted that the superior intellectual powers of Plato rendered him a much more competent interpreter of Socrates than the plain blunt Xenophon. The important thing is not the exact separation of the Socratic from the Platonic elements, which indeed is impossible, but the fact that the entire inspiration of Plato came from Socrates, without whom we should have had neither the Platonic Dialogues nor the philosophy of Aristotle.

Another point of resemblance between Socrates and Jesus is found in the fact that Socrates, too, was a poor man of humble origin. This, however, did not hinder him from receiving an education equal to that of the aristocratic class. In the intellectual democracy of Athens education effectively bridged social distinctions; and we find that Plato, like most of the companions and disciples of Socrates, was of patrician lineage. Socrates seems never to have written anything. At all events, nothing from his pen has come down to us. His life was one of voluntary poverty. Both Xenophon and Plato testify that handsome pecuniary offers were made to him, but that he always refused them. Indeed, he frequently sneers at the Sophists on the ground that they accepted fees for their teaching. His irony leads him to explain the matter by saying that, as he knew nothing, he could teach nothing, and consequently could not earn a fee; whereas the Sophists believed that they had real

knowledge of great value to communicate, and therefore were entitled to monetary rewards. They were of course mistaken; but as their pupils shared their error, the payments were given and received in good faith. Socrates always refused to stand for public office. He thought that if by his teaching he could raise up a line of able statesmen, he would thus render a better service to the State than by giving his own life to political work.

The character of Socrates is nowhere more charmingly manifested than in his ironical account of that Delphic oracle which had proclaimed him the wisest of men. His friend Chærephon reported this oracle to him; and Socrates, knowing, as he said, that he knew nothing, set himself to discover what the god could possibly mean. He went from one renowned philosopher to another, and discovered by cross-examination that these men were really without knowledge. At last, with genuine modesty as well as with irony, he concluded that because he was aware of his ignorance, he therefore was wiser than those who erroneously imagined themselves to know something.[1]

His attack upon the influence of the Sophists was of immense value as a stimulus to thought. The difference between him and them was perhaps less complete than he imagined, though no doubt it was a vulgar misrepresentation to identify him with them, as Aristophanes did in his comedy of *The Clouds*. Many times his reasoning, as reported by Plato and Xenophon, is as fallacious as theirs can have been; but there was the fundamental difference that he always insisted upon distinguishing between knowledge and assumption. He had, moreover, completely abandoned physical specula-

[1] *Apology* 22–23.

tions, on the ground that the trees had nothing to teach him.[1] Nothing could be more delightful or more merciless than his chaff of the Sophists.[2]

The basis of the charge that he was a corrupter of youth lay in the limitless influence which he certainly exercised over the younger men. They regarded him with spell-bound admiration, and were always eager to drink in his words. There can be no doubt that his influence was essentially good and elevating. The trouble was, however, that these young men were much more willing to obey him than their parents; and this probably led to many a heated scene. One can imagine the virtuous indignation of elderly Athenian gentlemen when their sons subjected their commands to the merciless scrutiny of the Socratic dialectic, and worked off on their grave and reverend seniors that demonstration of complete ignorance which Socrates had first made to them.

The other count in the indictment was a somewhat confused accusation of atheism and of introducing strange gods. Socrates had no difficulty in demonstrating the muddle-headedness of Meletus in seeking to charge him with both offences at once; but we can easily see how such an accusation could be more convincing to the Athenian laity than the very rational defence set up by the accused. In order to destroy the Sophistic scepticism, Socrates had systematically driven the doubts far deeper than the Sophists had done. He was, moreover, an extremely formidable critic of the orthodox religion of his

[1] "I am a lover of knowledge, and the men who dwell in the city are my teachers, and not the trees or the country."—*Phaedrus* 230.

[2] *Meno* 71, 76; *Euthydemus* 272 ff.; *Gorgias*, *passim; Republic* (in the character of Thrasymachus, &c.); and elsewhere.

time. Witness the long passages in the *Republic* in which he accuses Homer and Hesiod of blasphemy on account of the degrading anecdotes of the gods which they retailed. We can perceive that he was an intensely religious man, with a far deeper reverence for truth and goodness (which are essential deity) than any of his contemporaries.

But the charge of atheism on the lips of the vulgar never proves that those who are accused are really godless. It only proves that they have a conception of God which is beyond the comprehension of their critics. The "atheism" of Socrates consisted in his assertion that nothing is to be taught concerning God which represents God as other than good.[1] The application of such a principle made a clean sweep of most of the religious legends of the Athenians, just as it will of the great bulk of the doctrines which orthodox people for the last fifteen hundred years have mistaken for Christianity. This was the blasphemy of Socrates,—this and his unflinching analysis of the current ethical ideas. Nor was the indictment upon which he was condemned a new and hastily trumped-up one, since substantially the same

[1] "God, if he be good, is not the author of all things, as the many assert, but he is the cause of a few things only, and not of most things that occur to men; for few are the goods of human life, and many are the evils, and the good only is to be attributed to him: of the evil, other causes have to be discovered. . . .

"And if anyone asserts that the violation of oaths and treaties of which Pandarus was the real author, was brought about by Athene and Zeus, or that the strife and conflict of the gods was instigated by Themis and Zeus, he shall not have our approval; neither will we allow our young men to hear the words of Æschylus, when he says that 'God plants guilt among men when he desires utterly to destroy a house.' . . .

"Let this, then, be one of the rules of recitation and invention,—that God is not the author of evil, but of good only."—*Republic*, Book ii, § 379.

charges had been brought against him twenty-four years earlier by Aristophanes.

Let us pause to note how far-reaching is the principle laid down by Socrates in the passages to which I have referred. It not only destroys a vast proportion of the received teaching about God, both in popular Greek and in popular Christian thought, but it also makes the conscience of man the supreme authority upon all questions of religion. For who is to determine what is good? The answer of Socrates would be that the individual thinker, using his own judgment and thinking out the entire question fully and fairly, can alone be the judge. The principle of authority, as applied in Judaism and in the Roman and Protestant Churches, is dynamited by this ethical doctrine of the great Athenian. The principle commonly accepted,—namely, that everything is to be received as good which authority declares to have been done or commanded by God,—finds in the Socratic doctrine its polar antithesis. The law hidden in the spirit of man is to be the supreme judge both of men and of gods.

The authoritarian principle has been throughout history the great perverter of religion and moral judgment. It has forced men to approve of doctrines and acts flagrantly contradictory to the intuitions of the unsophisticated conscience. Christendom has been fundamentally degraded by the idolatrous idea that whatever is recorded of God in the Bible is true, and is necessarily good. This is essentially the principle maintained in the nineteenth century by Dean Mansel, and opposed, in the very spirit of Socrates, by John Stuart Mill. Mansel maintained that the goodness of God, being infinite, was probably different *in kind* from goodness as

understood and practised by men. To this suicidal position he was driven by the necessity of justifying the received Christian theology, with its ideas of blood atonement, substitutionary righteousness, everlasting torment, and the like. Mill, in refuting this doctrine, expressed himself in the following terms:

> Here, then, I take my stand on the acknowledged principle of logic and of morality, that when we mean different things we have no right to call them by the same name, and to apply to them the same predicates, moral and intellectual. Language has no meaning for the words Just, Merciful, Benevolent, save that in which we predicate them of our fellow-creatures; and unless that is what we intend to express by them, we have no business to employ the words. If in affirming them of God we do not mean to affirm these very qualities, differing only as greater in degree, we are neither philosophically nor morally entitled to affirm them at all. . . . If in ascribing goodness to God I do not mean what I mean by goodness; if I do not mean the goodness of which I have some knowledge, but an incomprehensible attribute of an incomprehensible substance, which for aught I know may be a totally different quality from that which I love and venerate—and even must, if Mr. Mansel is to be believed, be in some important particulars opposed to this—what do I mean by calling it goodness? and what reason have I for venerating it? If I know nothing about what the attribute is, I cannot tell that it is a proper object of veneration. To say that God's goodness may be different in kind from man's goodness, what is it but saying, with a slight change of phraseology, that God may possibly not be good? . . .
>
> If, instead of the "glad tidings" that there exists a Being in whom all the excellences which the highest human mind can conceive, exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a being whose attributes

are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, nor what are the principles of his government, except that "the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving" does not sanction them; convince me of it, and I will bear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this, and at the same time call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say in plain terms that I will not. Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do: he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go.[1]

This is the only principle which can prevent religion from becoming a system of superstition enforced by terrorization. It implies the essential identity of man with God, in the sense that there is and can be nothing higher than the conscience of humanity when disinterested and fully enlightened. We owe to Socrates the first clear and unmistakable enunciation of this doctrine. It is intensely depressing to reflect on the enormous difference which its acceptance would have made to the course of history from the fourth century B. C. down to the twentieth century of the Christian era. The barbarous forcings of conscience, the insistence on salvation through correctness of theological belief, the bloody wars of religion, the inhuman burning and torturing of heretics, would have been rendered impossible if men had only stood upon the simple principle that, since God is goodness, nothing evil can possibly have been done or commanded by him. And if at last we accept from

[1] J. S. Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, pp. 127–29. (Fourth edition, London: Longmans, 1872.)

Socrates this doctrine, and apply it as the regulative principle of our faith, we shall effectually establish the spiritual freedom and responsibility of man. We shall not destroy authority, but we shall see it where alone it can truly be found. It will involve the abandonment of the notion that God is infinite and omnipotent; but, at the same time, and for that very reason, it will destroy the artificial theological notion of evil, a notion which creates an insoluble contradiction by representing a perfectly good will as the source both of evil and of good.

In his analysis of the contribution made to human salvation by Jesus Christ, Matthew Arnold explains the power of Jesus as consisting in a method and a secret. The secret is that of inwardness; the method is that of self-renunciation. But Arnold was for the most part oblivious of that great crux of the moral life which so constantly forced itself upon the attention of Socrates. Arnold seems to have thought that if once the will were purified by self-renunciation and earnestly engaged in the cause of righteousness, its difficulties would end. He held that to the man of good will the content of the moral law is self-evident. He contends that it is not difficult to see what is right, but only to do it.[1]

This, however, is one of the disastrous practical mistakes which have played so tragic a part in Christian history. We are realizing to-day more than ever before that frequently it is even more difficult to decide what

[1] "Conduct is really, however men may overlay it with philosophical disquisitions, the simplest thing in the world. That is to say, it is the simplest thing in the world so far as *understanding* is concerned; as regards *doing*, it is the hardest thing in the world. Here is the difficulty,—to *do* what we very well know ought to be done."—*Literature and Dogma*, chap. i.

is right than to act rightly. There is in this respect a strange and saddening difference between the way in which the world advances intellectually and that in which it advances ethically. Every student of the physical sciences can start from the point reached by all his predecessors, and can avail himself of the full store of their garnered knowledge and experience. He is not obliged to repeat the experiments and the errors of men of centuries ago. His methods have been elaborated for him by the accumulated work of ages, and he inherits a mass of received and tested truth, upon the basis of which he can proceed in his quest for further knowledge. In practical morality, on the other hand, there is no such utilization of the experience of the race. Each new generation buys its wisdom by the same tragic and costly method of trial and error as all that have preceded. The hard-won discoveries of mankind as to the ways that lead to life and those that lead to death cannot be made convincing and coercive to the judgment as can the truths of physical and mathematical science. Now, one main reason for this state of things is the fact that we have scarcely begun to apply the scientific method to the demonstration of the empirical truths that relate to moral practice.

It is here that we most need to supplement the method and secret of Jesus by the method and secret of Socrates. Not, indeed, that we are to accept as completely true the Socratic ethical theory. There is in the Christian tradition an indispensable truth which Socrates ignored; but also there is in the Socratic teaching an indispensable truth which is almost omitted from the New Testament, and which has been completely overlooked in the doctrine and practice of the Christian Church.

The secret of Socrates (if one may continue to use the convenient terminology of Arnold) is the doctrine of the identity of virtue with true knowledge.[1] His method is to convict men of intellectual sin, by exposing their false conceit of wisdom, and by forcing them to confess that what they had taken for knowledge was really ignorance and baseless assumption. He maintained that if any man really knew what was good, he could not do anything that conflicted with it. Socrates does not mean by this merely to endorse the platitude of common prudence, that a man will not act against his own interest. He goes further. He conceives of good or right as a single and indivisible reality, and does not draw the common distinction between a man's own interest and the interest of others or of all.

In order justly to understand this doctrine, we must constantly remember that Socrates is not a materialist, and is not entangled in that ethical heresy and idolatry which imagines that the good of man consists in the things that he possesses. To identify the good with virtue and virtue with knowledge is to define the good as spiritual, and as qualitative, not quantitative. The good is a disposition of the mind and will, a quality of character, and a state of consciousness resulting therefrom. Certainly there is a physical organism through which the soul of man must function, and everything necessary to

[1] The essence of the Socratic doctrine is well expressed by Richard Hooker: "There was never sin committed, wherein a less good was not preferred before a greater, and that wilfully; which cannot be done without the singular disgrace of nature, and the utter disturbance of that divine order, whereby the pre-eminence of chiefest acceptation is by the best things worthily challenged. There is not that good which concerneth us, but it hath evidence enough for itself, if Reason were diligent to search it out."—*Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book i, § 8.

the maintenance and efficiency of that organism is an indispensable auxiliary to the attainment of the good. Material possessions are therefore not to be despised, nor is poverty to be exalted as desirable. The wise Hooker again furnishes us with a perfect statement of the case:

> Inasmuch as righteous life presupposeth life; inasmuch as to live virtuously it is impossible except we live; therefore the first impediment, which naturally we endeavour to remove, is penury and want of things without which we cannot live.[1]

The point to be remembered, however, is that all possessions and all wealth are merely *possible auxiliaries of the good;* they are never good in themselves. Even in the most beautiful works of art, what is good is not the material substance but the spiritual impress which they bear and communicate. In so far as they incarnate their creators they are good, because they are thus effective means to the creation of an analogous good in the minds of those who behold and use them. All separation of good from the spirit, all ascription of worth to anything other than spiritual qualities, is at once erroneous and dangerous. Ruskin reaffirmed this doctrine (which he had learned both from Socrates and from Jesus) when he asserted that there is no wealth but life. Money, and that wealth of which money is a measure and to which it constitutes a transferable title, is but a means to an end. Money in itself can be neither good nor evil. Only the end, which is the spiritual condition of rational agents, can possess any ethical or anti-ethical quality.

It is in this sense that Socrates is able to believe in the unity of the good. He ignores the clash between the good

[1] *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book i, § x.

of one and the good of all, because, from his point of view, that clash does not exist. The opposition is transcended. If we think of good as consisting in houses and lands, in metals and jewels, and in the currencies by which these things are appraised and transferred, there may be an endless conflict between the interests of men. But if we accept the principle that the good does not and cannot consist in externals, we then see that the conflict over *them* is not a conflict of goods. If the good be the perfection of the spiritual nature of man, then, since all men share the same nature, they must be capable of experiencing the one indivisible good. What is truly and essentially good for me must, by the force of the terms, be good also for you and for all rational agents.

This is the presupposition of all the ethical reasoning of Socrates. That quality of mind and character which alone is good is for him an attainable reality. It is of such nature that its claim to be considered good becomes self-evident to every man the moment he adequately conceives it. It is inherently and intrinsically preferable to all else; to know it is to desire it, with all the force of the soul's spontaneous love. It destroys the attractive power of all its rivals, as the rising sun puts the stars to flight. We believe in the possibility of a conflict of goods only because we are not enlightened as to the true nature and unity of the good.

It is impossible to use concerning the good, as Socrates conceived it, language adequate to the exaltation of his thought. Nor can one too emphatically insist that this intensity of appreciation was no sentimental preference of his. It was in the deepest sense a rational conviction, arrived at and justified by way of the fullest debate with all opposing doctrines. Among the many "modern"

ideas with which the *Republic* abounds, nothing is more conspicuous than the complete anticipation of that widespread doctrine which identifies morality with the self-interested conventions of a slave class. Thrasymachus and Glaucon are permitted to develop this thesis to the uttermost. So, too, is Callicles in the *Gorgias*. It is after taking full account of it,—after knowing all that can be said in the strongest terms against his own position,—that Socrates reaches the magnificent heights of ethical certitude which give such persuasive dignity to the closing books of the *Republic*. He does not always refute the anti-ethical position of the supermen by direct argumentation. Rather he leads them on, by a gradual disclosure of his thought on other subjects, and by engaging their minds in new aspects of the theme, to the point where suddenly their eyes are opened to the inherent nobility of real virtue, and to the fact that it is demanded by the ultimate law of *their own* being. Immediately this vision is caught, all the sophistry of the individualistic will-to-power school falls away of itself. The ultimate anchorage of the moral law is the fact that it is what the nature of man spontaneously wills as soon as it understands itself.

This central conviction of Socrates accounts for the unique importance ascribed in his system to right education. The high and solemn dedication of his philosopher-rulers to their life work [1] finds its explanation in the imperative need that before they assume their functions in the commonwealth their eyes shall be opened to the divine vision, and their minds trained to a just appreciation of the scale of human values. They must know what is the paramount and essential good attainable by

[1] See Books iii, iv and v of the *Republic*.

humanity, in order that they may administer the affairs of the State in accordance with sound principles, and secure to all its inhabitants the highest measure of true good (as distinguished from mere wealth or happiness) which they are capable of achieving. The same central conception explains the Socratic insistence that education is something more than a knowledge of facts. It is the path to essential beauty, to virtue, and to the divine. Since the real is to be sought in the sphere of ideas, the world of fact becomes a mere symbol and illustration of these intangible and super-sensible realities.[1] Thus all real knowledge is of the nature of intuition or inspiration,[2] which may ensue upon the process of laborious study, but is not ensured by it and does not follow from it by logical necessity.

Such a conception of knowledge and of the knowable explains the overwhelming enthusiasm with which Socrates devoted himself to his mission of exposing the false conceit of wisdom. For him all sin was ignorance, and all ignorance sin. His conception of virtue is expressed with literal exactness in the majestic and exalted language of one of the Church's invocations of God: "In *knowledge* of whom standeth our eternal life: whose service is perfect freedom." It was because he held this belief with an inexpressible intensity of conviction and realization that he chose a life of voluntary poverty and underwent a martyr's death for the sake of convicting men of that sin which blinded them to the perfect good.

He does not make a formal classification of the inward obstacles to knowledge, but throughout his teaching is

[1] See closing sections of Book vi, and opening section of Book vii of the *Republic*.

[2] See below, chapter vi.

implied his consciousness of the four great sources of error which Bacon calls the idols of the tribe, the idols of the cave, the idols of the market-place, and the idols of the theatre. Remembering the extent to which he was occupied in refuting the fallacies and unfounded assumptions of what passed for philosophies, we cannot doubt that he would have endorsed most heartily the statement of Bacon concerning these:—

Lastly, there are Idols which have immigrated into men's minds from the various dogmas of philosophies, and also from wrong laws of demonstration. These I call Idols of the Theatre; because in my judgment all the received systems are but so many stage-plays, representing worlds of their own creation after an unreal and scenic fashion. Nor is it only of the systems now in vogue, or only of the ancient sects and philosophies, that I speak; for many more plays of the same kind may yet be composed and in like artificial manner set forth; seeing that errors the most widely different have nevertheless causes for the most part alike. Neither again do I mean this only of entire systems, but also of many principles and axioms in science, which by tradition, credulity and negligence have come to be received.[1]

The explanation of the failure of Socrates to recognize the possibility of wilful wrong-doing, of what we call sinning against the light, is to be found in the extraordinary force of his own character. It was the very strength of the man that caused the weakness of his doctrine. He seems to have been endowed by nature with a fortitude of the spirit that was of a piece with the bodily hardihood ascribed to him by Alcibiades. By iron discipline, continued through life, he had become able to

[1] *Novum Organum*, Aphorism xliv.

do effortlessly and habitually what others could do only rarely and with difficulty, or not at all. For him, to know what was right was to be able to do it. It was not that he was immune by nature from temptation. On the contrary, in some respects, if we may believe Plato, he had in his youth been specially subject to the promptings of desire for several of the pleasures of the senses. But his inborn love for philosophy had enabled him to master these, and thus to turn what might have been besetting sins into besetting virtues.

Rationalist as he was, his rationalistic procedure was prompted by an intuition, involving an unshakable faith in an indemonstrable doctrine. That ultimate good which he identified with knowledge, and against which he could not imagine any man deliberately acting, was indefinable. "He could give," says Sidgwick,[1] "no account that satisfied him of good in the abstract." The reality of the good, and its identity with beauty and with truth, were for him presuppositions, not conclusions; or rather we may say that they were truths which, being self-evident, needed no demonstration. Since his own natural and acquired firmness of purpose enabled him always to tread the path marked out by conviction, he failed to allow for the fact that with other men there is a terrific and often insuperable obstacle to the doing of what is seen to be right. St. Paul was always bitterly conscious of this difficulty, and the whole of his energy was directed to overcoming it. It was his keen sense of the "war in our members," and of the spontaneous tendency to do what is admitted to be wrong, which inspired his unbounded gratitude to Jesus Christ, who for him had supplied the strength necessary to overcome

[1] *History of Ethics*, p. 37.

the wayward impulse. The shortcoming of Socrates is that, having himself been able, without the expulsive power of a personal affection, to eradicate the weakness that would have beguiled his feet from the paths of known duty, he did not realize the necessity for providing others with a dynamic to reinforce their insufficient powers in this direction.

For an instance of the method of Socrates which is not only illuminating, but has the added advantage of being in all probability authentic, we cannot do better than turn to Xenophon's record of a certain dialogue with Euthydemus.[1] In the Platonic composition of that title we cannot be sure whether we are listening to Socrates or to Plato. Its irony is almost more marked than that of any of the other Dialogues, and it is presumably not so much the actual memory of conversations with Euthydemus which inspires Plato as the purpose of killing with satire the eristic method. Plato was certainly equal to the invention of all that his *Euthydemus* contains. The limitations of Xenophon, on the other hand, constitute our best guarantee that he did not invent what he records of the dealings of Socrates with that noble youth, and accordingly we may the more securely rely upon the probable genuineness of what he offers us.

Euthydemus was a handsome young Athenian gentleman, of considerable attainments, who had formed a collection of the writings of many poets and sophists, imagining that he was thereby surpassing the accomplishments of his contemporaries. He intended to devote himself to public affairs. It was his manner, however, not to seek any instruction from other men, but by his

[1] *Memorabilia of Socrates*, Book iv, chap. ii.

own study and thought to equip himself for the career to which he aspired. Socrates, observing this, made a point of uttering in the hearing of Euthydemus remarks to the effect that no man could prepare himself for the work of a statesman merely by reading, or without special discipline in the particular tasks which he proposed later to undertake. As Euthydemus, with the superior self-confidence of youth, was wont to withdraw from conversations of this kind, Socrates satirized his procedure by depicting him as applying to the public for the office not of a statesman but of a physician:—

"I, O men of Athens" [he imagines Euthydemus saying], "have never learned the medical art from anyone, nor have been desirous that any physician should be my instructor; for I have constantly been on my guard, not only against learning anything of the art from anyone, but even against appearing to have learned the medical art; nevertheless, confer on me this medical appointment; for I will endeavour to learn by making experiments upon you." [1]

In like manner he points out that any person who wished to learn to play the flute or to ride would go for tuition to masters of those simple arts; and that the pursuits of the statesman, being incalculably more difficult, necessitated special instruction in a much greater degree.

Afterwards, out of consideration for the modesty of the young man, Socrates went alone to a certain bridle-maker's shop where Euthydemus was wont to read, and questioned him concerning his books. He begins with a half-ironical expression of his admiration, "because you have not preferred acquiring treasures of silver and gold rather than of wisdom." He then, by a series of

[1] *Memorabilia, loc. cit.*, § 5.

questions, elicits the confession that Euthydemus was desirous of attaining that talent "by which men become skilled in governing states, in managing households, able to command, and qualified to benefit other men as well as themselves." His next step is to raise artfully the question of the nature of justice. Euthydemus is at first quite confident that he will be able to enumerate the works of justice, and to distinguish them from those of injustice. Socrates proposes to make lists of these "works," and to draw up a catalogue from his victim's dictation. Under the heading of injustice he thus enumerates falsehood, deceit, the enslavement of men, etc. Having extracted these data, he at once proceeds to state cases in which every one of them might be practised justly,—for example, the enslavement of an unjust and hostile people by the leader of an army.

Not being able to deny this, Euthydemus qualifies his former assertions by maintaining that it was just to do such things to enemies, but unjust to practise them towards friends. Hereupon Socrates, by stating more hypothetical cases, extorts the acknowledgment that this distinction also fails. A father, for example, would be right to deceive a sick son by giving him medicine as ordinary food; or a man might justly steal the sword with which his friend intended to slay himself. Euthydemus is by this time reduced to saying, "I no longer put confidence in the answers which I give, for all that I said before appears to me now to be quite different from what I then thought." He ventures, however, to suggest that intentional deception is more unjust than involuntary deception.

By a highly sophistical argument, which imposes upon Euthydemus, Socrates next compels the admission that

a man who knows what is just but practises injustice is more just than he who does just deeds unreflectingly.

With many more questions Socrates produces in the young man the disheartening realization that he does not know what is good, either for himself or for others. "These points, however," proceeds Socrates, "you have perhaps not sufficiently considered, from a too confident belief that you were already well acquainted with them; but since you intend to be at the head of a democratic government, you doubtless know what a democracy is." "Assuredly," answers Euthydemus, and defines the *demos* as consisting of the poorer class of citizens. Socrates promptly catches him here by asking him what constitutes poverty. Having shown that small means were sufficient for some, while large fortunes were insufficient for others, and therefore that the conventional judgment as to riches and poverty must be in many cases inverted, he at last forces the bewildered youth to say, "I am considering whether it would not be best for me to be silent, for I seem to know absolutely nothing."

Of those who were thus treated by Socrates [says Xenophon] many came to him no more, and these he regarded as too dull to be improved; but Euthydemus, on the contrary, conceived that he could by no other means become an estimable character than by associating with Socrates as much as possible; and he in consequence never quitted him, unless some necessary business obliged him to do so. He also imitated many of his habits. When Socrates saw that he was thus disposed, he no longer puzzled him with questions, but explained to him in the simplest and clearest manner what he thought that he ought to know, and what it would be best for him to study.

We must remember that this terrible dialectic machine, in which poor Euthydemus was crushed, was not employed by Socrates for the sake of its negative results. He neither wished to display his own cleverness, nor to provide the young men with an instrument by which they might make themselves a nuisance to others. His unshakable conviction was that, hard as the obtaining of true knowledge may be, yet the greatest obstacle to it was men's false idea that they already possessed it. Now from this false idea very few of us are free. We are all more or less in the position of that student of botany who defined a leaf as "a flat green object which we know all about already." Until this illusion of knowledge is removed, truth can gain no entrance into the mind.

Socrates is differentiated from the Sophists in part by the fact that he never used his critical method for its own sake, and that he was as rigorous with himself as with others, and as ready to be confuted as to confute. Despite the genuine modesty with which he avowed his own ignorance, moreover, we know that he had in reserve a body of very definite and positive ideas touching all the problems of the conduct of life, which he was eager to communicate to his pupils as soon as he had disciplined them into readiness for it. First he must convict them of sin, that afterwards he might initiate them into the way of right knowledge and righteousness.

To what positive beliefs the process of conviction was introductory, we may see in the Platonic Dialogues. There we have an inexhaustible fount of ideas, many of which to-day are being laboriously rediscovered and trumpeted abroad as the newest and best results of human wisdom. The *Republic* offers us the majestic

image of an ideal State, governed competently and benevolently by an aristocracy, in the literal sense of that term,—that is, by a caste selected in virtue of its natural endowments and educated by a lifelong rigorous discipline for the lofty functions it is destined to discharge. These governors are to possess no property of their own, in order that they may be absolutely disinterested in their office.[1]

In outlining their studies, Socrates incidentally lays down one of the most fundamental of the modern principles of pedagogy, which is that the voluntary interest and self-activity of the pupil must always be engaged.[2]

Nor does he fail to pierce through that most obstinate of prejudices which until our own day has excluded woman from an equal part with man in the control of the world's affairs.[3]

The idea of the selective breeding of the human race, which is the inspiration of our modern eugenics movement, is equally familiar to Plato. He also avoids that degradation of it which, by reducing it to the level of pigeon-fancying or cattle-breeding, would make it incompatible with the spiritual dignity of mankind. Greek

[1] *Republic*, Book iii, §§ 416–17.

[2] "A free man ought to be a free man in the acquisition of knowledge. Bodily exercise, when compulsory, does no harm; but knowledge which is acquired under compulsion has no hold on the mind."—*Republic*, Book viii, § 536.

[3] "In the administration of a State, neither a woman as a woman, nor a man as a man, has any special function, but *the gifts of nature are equally diffused in both sexes*. . . .

"The woman has *equally with the man* the qualities which make a guardian; she differs only in degrees of strength. . . .

"Being of the same nature with them, ought they not to have the same pursuits? . . .

"The contrary practice, which prevails at present, is in reality a violation of nature."—*Republic*, Book v, §§ 455–56.

as he is, Plato does not suggest that bodily fineness should be the sole end aimed at in a eugenic scheme. It is the blending of spiritual qualities, for the purpose of ensuring their harmonious balance and stability, that he advocates. His plan is "to make matrimony as holy as possible, the most beneficial marriages being the most holy."

Such are a few of the ideas, commonly supposed to be essentially modern, which we find presented by the Platonic Socrates, and discussed with a many-sidedness and maturity of wisdom all too rare in our own day. Yet not alone for these are we indebted to him. Far more important is the teaching, which is constantly recurring in his conversations, that morality finds its basis in the nature of man and of things, and its justification in the quality of character which it produces. The essential fallacy of the school which claims (however falsely) to follow Nietzsche is the notion that a man can trample down the dictates of conscience, can utterly ignore the good of others and use them merely as a means to his selfish ends, and can be the same man after he has done this as he was before. The unanswerable refutation of this naïve idea is the priceless achievement of Socrates. "Do not imagine," he says in effect, "that we are telling you to be honest, truthful, chaste, sober, just and merciful, in order to prevent you from enjoying life and being happy. On the contrary, it is because we are as deeply interested in your self-fulfillment as you yourself can be, that we give you this counsel. Try it and see. Prove all things, but hold fast that which is good." Nowhere is the doctrine of the inevitable deterioration that follows upon immorality more perfectly brought out than in the great myths

in the *Gorgias* [1] and in the *Phaedo*,[2] in which, as elsewhere, Plato advances the idea of eternal punishment, as being the only adequate expression of the incurable corruption of a soul which has chosen evil and systematically committed the worst crimes. With this teaching he combines the humane and rational doctrine that the purpose of punishment should be either reformatory or exemplary, but never vindictive.[3]

Be it remembered that the Platonic myths [4] embody no dogmatic teaching. They are attempts to express in pictures the truths which cannot be conveyed by words. The ultimate purpose of the teacher—Socrates or Plato—is to arouse something more than a mere logical assent to his positions. He desires to quicken an enthusiastic conviction which shall fructify in ennobling and consistent action. Therefore it is that, after exhausting all the resources of his dialectic art, he precipitates into mythical pictures the profound intuitive convictions which are the inspiration of his own life.

[1] Sections 524–25. [2] Sections 113–14.

[3] "Now the proper office of punishment is twofold; he who is rightly punished ought either to become better and profit by it, or he ought to be made an example to his fellows, that they may see what he suffers, and fear and become better; those who are punished by gods and men, and improved, are those whose sins are curable; still the way of improving them, as in this world so also in another, is by pain and suffering; for there is no other way in which they can be delivered from their evil. But they who have been guilty of the worst crimes, and are incurable by reason of their crimes, are made examples; for, as they are incurable, the time has passed at which they can receive any benefit themselves. But others get good when they behold them for ever enduring the most terrible and painful and fearful sufferings as the penalty of their sins; there they are, hanging up as examples, in the prison-house of the world below, a spectacle and a warning to all unrighteous men who come thither."—*Gorgias*, § 527.

[4] In this connection should be studied the excellent treatise on *The Myths of Plato*, by Professor J. A. Stewart, of Oxford.

The question whether life is good and is worth living presents itself to the intellect as a problem demanding to be solved; but the whole man,—the synthesis in which intellect is but one element—is the concrete solution of that problem. He is the outcome of action by past generations upon the instinctive but indemonstrable certainty that life is good. On the plane of rational and conceptual thought the question, Is life worth living? is unanswerable, and therefore idle; but the answer is given in the fact that we are alive, and in the further fact that we cannot act save upon the presupposition that life is worth living.

Now the service of myth and poetry consists in restoring to us the vision of the world as *felt*. It precipitates and communicates what Professor Stewart has well called "transcendental feeling." The purpose of the myth-form is not to answer questions, but, by touching hidden chords, to stir the memory and open the forgetful eyes. Our greatest modern American poet, William Vaughn Moody, in his drama *The Fire-bringer*, has some lines which exactly convey this function of myth. It is to restore to consciousness the sense of

> . . . an inner freshness in the dew,
> A look inscrutable the stars put on,
> A fount of secret colour in the dawn;
> After dayfall a daylight that remains,
> Brighter than what is gone.

Among the unutterable truths by which the whole life of Socrates was animated, the chief was his conviction of the unconditional worth and imperativeness of the law of virtue, considered not as an arbitrary command imposed from without, but as the expression of that

deepest selfhood in man which is one with the ultimate reality of the universe. This it is which he seeks to convey by the doctrine of immortality and of the eternal punishment of the desperately wicked, who incur this fate as the natural consequence of having violated their own essential nature. Such is his answer to the clever sophistry which declares morality to be a mere bundle of conventions devised by "the many weak."

Here, as elsewhere in this book, I find myself enmeshed in the hopeless difficulty of treating in a single chapter a theme to which even a large volume could not do justice. Yet perhaps I may make my peace with the reader, and with the imperial spirit of Socrates, if I can but achieve the one purpose of this inadequate sketch. I am not seeking to give a synoptic outline that shall serve in lieu of first-hand study, but only to bring my readers to Plato.

It was once said of Shakespeare that he was "an intellectual ocean, whose waves washed all the shores of thought." This is an excellent phrase, though as applied to Shakespeare it is inept and incongruous; but it does with most felicitous appropriateness characterize Plato. My contention is that the Platonic Dialogues contain a revelation as genuinely divine as that of the Hebrew Scriptures. Nor do I use these words sentimentally, but with a vivid and clear idea in mind which I wish to convey by them. Revelation does not mean the disclosure, from a superhuman source, of new truth which the mind of man could not otherwise attain. There is perhaps not a single doctrine in the Bible that has not been set forth by other men whom nobody asserts to have been supernaturally enlightened. What revelation practically means is the presentation of

spiritual truth with vivifying *power*, so that it becomes not a mere intellectual belief but a volitional force. That truth is to me a revelation which springs to life within me, changing the course of my conduct and the quality of my character.

In this sense, there is to some extent a divine revelation in the literature of every nation, but pre-eminently in the literatures of Palestine and Greece. Of the influence of the Bible it would be irrelevant to speak here; and my silence should not be understood as implying disparagement of it. But Plato for more than twenty centuries has been to the learned and the elect what the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures have been to the mass. One of the advances most earnestly to be desired is that he may henceforth become for the mass what hitherto he has been only for the minority.[1] To say that this is impossible would be to pass a final condemnation upon democracy. For the source of all the rawnesses from which our democracy suffers is precisely the lack of such

[1] This influence of Plato has been expressed in a manner beyond rivalry by Emerson: "These sentences contain the culture of nations. These are the corner-stone of schools; these are the fountain-head of literatures. A discipline it is in logic, arithmetic, taste, symmetry, poetry, language, rhetoric, ontology, morals or practical wisdom. There was never such range of speculation. Out of Plato come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought. Great havoc makes he among our originalities. We have reached the mountain from which all these drift boulders were detached. The Bible of the learned for twenty-two hundred years, every brisk young man who says in succession fine things to each reluctant generation,—Boethius, Rabelais, Erasmus, Bruno, Locke, Rousseau, Alfieri, Coleridge,—is some reader of Plato, translating into the vernacular, wittily, his good things. Even the men of grander proportion suffer some deduction from the misfortune (shall I say?) of coming after this exhausting generalizer. St. Augustine, Copernicus, Newton, Behmen, Swedenborg, Goethe, are likewise his debtors, and must say after him."—Essay on Plato, in *Representative Men*.

enlightenment as philosophy can give. We walk in darkness because we are materialists, and by necessary consequence idolaters. We are bemused by the hypnotism of sense and outward things. By nobody can this baleful spell be so effectively and permanently remitted as by the enchanter Plato. Our popular religion would be completely transfigured and incalculably enhanced in its value as a light and a force for the conduct of life if its ministers and adherents were disciplined from childhood in Plato as they are in the Bible. They should know the words of Socrates as familiarly as they know the words of Jesus.

It is complained that ethical doctrine is cold and abstract, and that for the purposes of religion a personality is needed, in whom the abstract truth shall be incarnate, and upon whose strength the wayfaring man may draw. One of the virtues of the Platonic literature is that it meets this need. In the pages of Plato we do indeed find a person, as distinct, as original, as inspiring and stimulating as the divine person whom fifty generations have found in the Gospels. The combination in Plato of the skill of the poet and dramatist with an unexampled power of abstract thought constitutes one of the high-water marks of the literature of all time. How desperately difficult is the dialogue as a literary vehicle for philosophic teaching is demonstrated by the almost universal failure of Plato's imitators.

The Platonic secret is the possession, and the use in the service of ethical philosophy, of a power of characterization equal to that of a Shakespeare or a Dickens. Without resorting to description, but simply by placing self-disclosing words in the mouths of his characters,

Plato renders them as vivid and as highly individualized as those of the greatest fiction or drama. Think of the impression he gives of the reeling demigod Alcibiades in the *Symposium*,[1] and of the dramatic way in which the picture of his entrance, "crowned with a massive garland of ivy and wall-flowers, and having his head flowing with ribbons," is timed to relax the tension produced by "that celestial colloquy sublime" with which Socrates has just "strained to the height" the reader's mental and spiritual powers. Consider, again, the way in which the noble modesty and rare abilities of Theaetetus are anticipated, and afterwards manifested in his own person. Or study by the canons of dramatic or fictional criticism the character of the kindly old Crito, so loyal to his friend and master that he will surrender, though with a breaking heart, the hope of saving that master's life, rather than urge him to violate his conscience. One of the noblest literary revenges in history is that taken by Plato upon Aristophanes, by introducing that slanderous comedian in the *Symposium*, and placing upon his lips a story [2] entirely in his spirit, but finer than anything he could himself have done.

Thus might one go through the rich gallery of Plato's pictures of other men, each depicted with some master-touches that make them living and unforgettable. But the glory of them all is gathered up and transcended in the central picture of Socrates himself, the greatest example in human story of inflexible integrity combined with unfailing urbanity and practical sagacity. Socrates is such a gentleman that any glimpse of him makes us ashamed of our modern vulgarity. In his poverty he

[1] Sections 212–13. [2] Sections 189–93.

is richer than our millionaires, more majestic than our kings. In his freedom from pedantry he puts to shame many of our educators, whose whole vitality is absorbed in a single specialism. Socrates is capable of such subtlety of intellectual construction and discrimination as human thought has never surpassed. Yet he is the beloved boon companion of the young men, who are able at once to revere and to chaff him. And which among the modern thinkers who strive to be impartial has ever rivalled the dispassionateness of one who (as we see in the *Crito*) would not condescend to twist an argument even to save his life?

Addison, in one of his charming essays, uses the phrase, "the divine Socrates." [1] If this epithet is not to be an empty word, it must connote, as I have suggested, the power of creating spiritual life in others. Such divinity can no more be denied to Socrates than to Jesus. To enter the presence of the immortal Athenian is to be made ashamed of all that is low and petty and self-centred. For he is not merely an example of unsurpassable human grandeur, but also a living source of ennoblement to all who approach him. He is, in short, a Saviour.

[1] *Spectator*, No. 146.

CHAPTER VI

INSPIRATION: ITS NATURE AND CONDITIONS

THE time in which we live has one characteristic which it shares in common with all preceding periods. This is the tendency to self-depreciation. We hear on every hand that the age lacks inspiration, and does not command the conditions which lead to the emergence of genius in any department. We have fallen, it is said, on a time of machinery and mediocrity. Masters of the means of life to a degree unparalleled by any former epoch, we have lost sight of the ends of life. Nay, even the mastery of machinery is in great measure illusory, for we tend ever more and more to become the slaves of the great engines which our hands have made. The outward and visible mechanism is a symbol of our hypnotization by the mechanical energies of life. We have lost our grip of the spirit as a force and a cause of events. We regard ourselves as phenomena, as effects, as links in a chain, mere vehicles of forces which we cannot control or direct.

Self-depreciation, however, on some pretext or other, is, as I have said, a characteristic of all ages. The disparaging contrast between our own day and former periods is a part of the perennial illusion of "the good old times"—those golden days whose disappearance has been lamented by writers in every age, from Homer to our own. When Sir Owen Seaman was appointed editor of *Punch*, somebody complained to him that the paper

was not half so good as it used to be. He replied, "No, it never was." The great humorist here supplied the true refutation of all pessimistic comparisons between the present and the past. When we are told that times are not so good as formerly, the answer is, "No, they never were." Homer bewails the decadence of the men of his day as compared with an earlier race, any one of whom could hurl a rock that not three of Homer's contemporaries could lift. Bacon's contempt for the degenerate dramatic poetry of his time is a phenomenon that we do well to remember. Addison, writing in the noonday of what was afterwards called the Augustan age of English literature, is full of satire over the corrupt taste of his contemporaries. The inspiration of an age is thus almost always concealed from those who are its chief embodiments.

I propose in this chapter to attempt an analysis of the conditions under which what we term inspiration manifests itself, with a view to arriving, if possible, at an approximate and working definition of it. For one of our difficulties is the vagueness of the idea. Not knowing what inspiration substantively is, knowing it only negatively (that is, being conscious when it is absent), or only adjectivally—through its effects, which frequently do not appear until it is spent—we are unable to interpret rightly the signs of its approach, or to prepare the conditions which favour its manifestation.

To almost all of us, whether our antecedents be Christian or Jewish, the term inspiration still suggests, first of all, the Bible. We were brought up on the idea that that one book is inspired, in a sense in which no others are. Let us, then, try to determine what the inspiration of the Bible has practically meant to those who believed in it,

and what is the value of the theory by which they sought to account for their experience.

The doctrine of Biblical inspiration was not hit upon by a mere vagary of the human mind. There was a solid basis of experience out of which it grew. The history of Protestantism and Puritanism convinces us that those who formulated the mechanical doctrine of verbal infallibility were driven to do so by phenomena which certainly called for some explanation. They had come into touch with a vitalizing and transforming power as a result of their devout study of the Hebrew books. The martyrs of Smithfield, the Pilgrim Fathers, Cromwell's Ironsides, John Bunyan and George Fox,—all these and many others were instances of the power which somehow flowed from those old pages. It was no delusion of theirs that they had been raised above themselves. They had revalued all the values of life. They had been quickened into a boundless humility towards the Moral Ideal, which they envisaged as a personal God, and into a boundless courage and self-reliance in facing the unjust claims of kings and tyrants. Macaulay has well and truly said of the Puritan that "he prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker: but he set his foot on the neck of his king." [1] Verily, there was some wonderful power which could thus make martyrs, heroes, soldiers and statesmen out of the lackeys and apprentices of London, the tinkers, cobblers and hinds of the countryside.

It needs but slight study of literature to enable us to realize that it was the intense passion for justice of the Hebrew prophets, expressed in the burning eloquence of the English version, and conned with the reverence naturally accorded to what was considered a divine

[1] Essay on Milton.

revelation, which thus entered into the souls of men, making the weak strong and the strong stronger, transmuting the commonplace into the rare soul, and quickening into genius and the power of leadership characters that without this inspiration would have remained mediocre.

The misfortune was that owing to the very limited literary experience of those who underwent this transformation, they were able to give only an inadequate and misleading account of it. They resorted to a theory according to which the Biblical books were inspired, but not their writers. The old doctrine of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible means that the writers did not express their selfhood in what they wrote. It was not their human souls that were incarnated in these undying utterances. They functioned merely as amanuenses to a conscious intelligence other than their own. Their highest achievement was a microscopic accuracy in transmitting what had thus been communicated to them. They played the part only of stenographers or dictaphone records; and it is not customary to speak of stenographers as inspired, save in a satirical sense.

Out of this forced and unnatural theory of verbal inspiration there arose the childlike notion that all the statements of fact in the Bible must necessarily be true. We look back to-day upon this theory with a certain sense of amusement, not untinctured with shame. It is only just to remind ourselves, however, that the essential premiss of the theory in question was accepted not only by the orthodox, but also by the iconoclastic rationalists of the school of Thomas Paine, Charles Bradlaugh, and Robert Ingersoll, who fought against them. The ortho-

dox maintained (as we saw above, p. 45 ff.) a sort of circular argument, to the effect that every statement in the Bible must be true because the Bible was inspired; and, conversely, that the inspiration of the Bible was proved by the fact that all the statements it contained were true. The iconoclasts, on the other hand, accepting the criterion of inspiration thus implied, maintained that because there were errors of fact in the Bible it could not be inspired.

It is the naïveté of this position which strikes us to-day. We smile at arguments which imply that if only Jonah's fish had had a slightly larger throat, the critics could comfortably have swallowed the story that it swallowed Jonah; that if only Noah's ark had been rather larger and better ventilated, the story of the Flood might have stood as history; that if the periods of the first chapter of Genesis had not been quite so obviously meant for literal days, the account of creation might have passed muster. Such an attitude makes the days of the "cudgel controversialists" seem indefinitely remote from our own, recent as they are in fact. We feel about the whole preposterous contention much as we might feel about a dispute concerning the inspiration of *Macbeth*, one party to which should maintain that the play was inspired because all its historical statements were true, the other contending that it could not be so because some of its assertions were erroneous. We are amazed by the ineptitude of the criterion, and the irrelevance of the whole discussion. With a wider literary experience, a broader acquaintance (as Matthew Arnold said) with the way the human mind works, we assume without discussion the principle that the test of inspiration is the effect of any great literature in quickening the mind and

conscience of those who study it, and in arousing them in turn to original activity.

The Bible writers give us scarcely any hint of what their inspiration meant to them; but the old mechanical view is clearly due to a falsely literal interpretation of their poetic and figurative phrases. In one of the few places where a Biblical writer lets us to some extent into his secret, we get an account totally different from that of the amanuensis-theory. The writer of the Book of Revelation tells us, indeed, that he was in the Spirit, and that while in the Spirit he was shown a vision of the celestial world and talked with hierarchs of the host of heaven. By these he was conducted and shown the things that must shortly come to pass. But the words in which he was to describe the vision, unlike the special messages to the seven Churches, were in no wise dictated to him. "What thou seest write in a book," says the great voice,[1] but the narrator is left to choose his own language for this purpose. He chose words which, even through the medium of a translation, stir the blood after nineteen centuries, amazing us by their poignant eloquence and by a descriptive power which sets a new and higher limit to the known range of literary possibility. Yet the work is confessedly that of a man, who is not merely the amanuensis of a superhuman intelligence. I am not, of course, contending that we have in Revelation a literal transcript of a subjective experience. The more we allow, however, for the free play of the writer's poetic genius, the more is this view of his inspiration strengthened.

St. Paul too was a man of visions, and occasionally he intimates that he is voicing an authority higher than

[1] Rev. i, 11.

his own,[1] though at other times he acknowledges that he is speaking out of his own moral judgment,[2] and even expresses some doubt as to whether he has the sanction of the Lord.[3] But few, reading his letters, with their strongly marked individuality of style and their obvious relation to the stormy incidents of his busy and heroic career, can now seriously entertain the notion that their inspiration emanated from any other source than his own mind and experience.

It is the phrase of the prophets, "Thus saith the Lord," which has chiefly given rise to the theory of mechanical and verbal inspiration. When the prophet, by brooding over the iniquity of his people and musing deeply on the principles and ideals which ought to guide Israel, had attained to a clear vision of the course that should be followed, he prefaced his appeal to his compatriots with the words, "Thus saith the Lord." We may take our choice between believing that he meant, "Thus saith the universal moral judgment, which exists both in you and me; whose dicta you can verify by searching your own conscience and your own experience," and believing that he meant, "Thus saith a superhuman and supernatural conscious intelligence, which has revealed to me what I never could have discovered for myself, and what you are bound to believe upon its authority, without hope of verifying it." Which of the two is the sounder construction is a question which answers itself to anyone familiar with other inspired literatures as well as with the Bible.

In the writings of Plato we find a most interesting account of inspiration, as well as one of the most mar-

[1] *E. g.*, I Cor. vii, 10. [2] *Ibid.*, verse 12. [3] *Ibid.*, verse 25.

vellous instances of it which antiquity has bequeathed to us. Professor Jowett has well said of the *Symposium* that of all the works of Plato it "is the most perfect in form, and may be truly thought to contain more than any commentator has ever dreamed of; or, as Goethe said of one of his own writings, more than the author himself knew." The *Symposium* contains that incomparable speech of Socrates which ostensibly embodies the substance of a revelation made to him by the wise woman Diotima, the prophetess. Happily, there is no narrow-minded religious sect of Platonists burning to convince us that this account of the wise woman is literal fact, and that Socrates was merely the transmitter of the doctrine of inspiration which his speech formulates. The substance of the revelation is, indeed, little more than a compendium of principles and doctrines set forth in many other parts of the Socratic teaching as conveyed to us by Plato.

Its teaching is that inspiration is a reality,—a possible experience; yet one that may come only after the most rigorous and persistent intellectual discipline, begun in childhood and continued into mature life. The child has to start by concentrating his attention upon some one beautiful form; then he must study many such forms. He will thus become aware of the identity of the beauty embodied in them all. Gradually, after the study of fair forms, he can proceed to the contemplation of fair ideas and of institutions animated by them: and at last it may be his good hap to have the vision of Beauty absolute and eternal burst upon his view. Such, says Socrates, is the only possible means of attaining to inspiration; and such is the divine reward awaiting him who has followed the gleam "down the nights and down the days,"

and "down the arches of the years"; who has toiled upward in the night, and laboured over the crags and steeps of the mountainous years, until he attains the summit whence alone may be beheld "the high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day." I cannot forgo the pleasure of quoting the closing sentences of this speech of Socrates:—

> But what if man had eye to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality, and all the colours and vanities of human life; thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty, divine and simple, and bringing into being and educating true creations of virtue, and not idols only? Do you not see that in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities; for he has hold not of an image but of a reality; and, bringing forth and educating true virtue, to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life? [1]

It would be cruel to elaborate the comparison which inevitably suggests itself between this passage, from what has ordinarily been regarded as profane and secular literature, and such books as Daniel and Esther, which are included in the canon of works divinely inspired.

In Plato's *Republic* this theory of inspiration is depicted even more minutely in the celebrated allegory of the cave men, at the beginning of the seventh book. The native state of man is as that of chained dwellers in an underground den, which is lighted only from behind. These subterranean prisoners can see nothing but the shadows before their eyes; hence they mistake the

[1] *Symposium*, §§ 211–12.

shadows for realities. It may, however, be the hap of one of them to break free from his chains, to turn his back upon the shadows, and to set out upon the toilsome steep that leads upwards to the source of light. His eyes will at first be dazzled, but gradually he will become capable of seeing those objects which had cast the shadows of his previous experience. After a long adaptation to his new surroundings, he will become capable of beholding the moon and stars, and finally of "kindling his undazzled eye at the full midday beam."

Here is most beautifully expressed the essential paradox of the Platonic doctrine. The struggle, the discipline, the scaling of the heights,—this is the indispensable preparation for the vision; yet, when that vision comes, it is of the nature of revelation. It is not the *consequence* of what the striver has gone through, nor is it guaranteed to him. He may or may not attain to the beatific vision. Certainly he will not without the long preparation; that is indispensable in any case: but he may not, even after he has undergone it. The view from the mountain-top is not the logical or necessary result of the climb: but without the climb it never can be seen.

This intense rationalism of Plato is most unwelcome to the mental indolence of our times. We are afflicted with a species of Cubists and Futurists, not alone in art, but in every department of human activity. Our ears are assailed by the doctrine which opposes inspiration to mental effort, and sets up a false and dangerous antithesis between intellection and intuition. This school takes in vain the name of Bergson, and professes to have his authority for disparaging hard thinking and hard study. There is in truth no justification for this to

be found in Bergson's works. He has proudly and rightly claimed that no philosophy gives to the method, spirit and results of science a higher value than his own ascribes to them. But because he has emphasized the extra-logical factors in the human spirit, and has insisted that a full and true vision of reality cannot be attained by the logical process alone, he is seized upon by those who desire to be absolved from the task of hard thinking and scientific work. They seek to make him the sponsor of an anti-intellectualism which is suicidal,—which, indeed, would prevent the development of his own philosophical method, as well as of every other worthy human enterprise.

The common shibboleth of the anti-rationalists in painting and poetry, as well as in other fields, is a variant of the special doctrine of Quakerism. It is possible that they may feel shocked or intellectually insulted by such an assertion. Yet when they talk, as they do, of expressing oneself, irrespective of social consequences, they are only parodying the Quaker notion of that Inner Light which is directly kindled by the Spirit. They forget, too, that before you can express yourself, you must first acquire a self that is worth expressing; and they ignore the difficulty of developing such selfhood.

It is not for a moment to be questioned that the inspired artist can and rightly does transcend the prescriptions of technique. It is, indeed, his breaches of rule that create rules for his successors. His felicitous departures from convention become a new technique for after-times. But one condition of transcending an established artistic standard is that a man shall first have mastered it; and this can only be done through intense labour.

An amusing illustration of this fact was once brought to a friend of mine by a young lady who sought his judgment upon a poem she had written. It was a poem of the *vers libre* order. It reminded him irresistibly of the description of the earth in the first chapter of Genesis, in that it was not only without form, but also void. Wishing to be truthful as well as polite, my friend ventured the suggestion that there are two possible reasons for ignoring technique: the one, because you are above it; the other, because you can't do it: and that her poem left in his mind a certain doubt as to which of these two reasons had actuated her.

The refutation of the lazy modern theory that inspiration is independent of intellectual effort is supplied by a mere glance at the life and work of any great creative artist. Think of Shakespeare's years of apprenticeship, when, in addition to direct work in every department of practical stagecraft, he whetted the edge of his poetic power upon all sorts of old plays, inserting characters and incidents to suit the taste of the London tradesmen and their wives and 'prentice boys, as well as his own.

I would prefer, however, to cite an instance which to most readers is unfortunately less familiar. We have almost forgotten that Milton is not only a greater poet even than Shakespeare in respect of sheer sublimity (though, to be sure, a lesser poet in respect of versatility and insight into human character), but also the writer of the very greatest prose in the English language. Even those who study him in high school or college generally become acquainted only with fragments of his prose work, particularly the *Areopagitica*. This is a great misfortune; for in the tomes that we do not read, despite the seeming obsoleteness of many of their themes, there

are scores of passages full of moral wisdom, lofty thinking, and a majestic eloquence with which nothing outside the English Bible is worthy to be compared.[1]

Now, making every allowance for Milton's exceptional native endowment that the anti-intellectual inspirationist cares to insist upon, it remains true that his mastery in prose and verse was achieved only by the deliberate dedication of his entire life to his vocation. Even from his Cambridge days he was planning the epic which he did not write until his old age. After a period of quiet retirement in the country followed by Continental travels, he felt bound in conscience to turn aside from his poetic projects and to take a share in the great battle for mental and political freedom which was then breaking out in England. He could not refuse to write in the cause of religious liberty, though the controversy was distasteful to him. By reason of his exceptional scholarship and his rare powers of expression, his conscience challenged him to do a work which the hour demanded, and which he more than other men was equipped to perform. Yet he cannot conceal his bent, or abstain from the topic that really interests him. In the midst of a volume of argumentation about the government of the

[1] I am reminded that I am here repeating a lament voiced ninety years ago by Macaulay: "It is to be regretted that the prose writings of Milton should, in our time, be so little read. As compositions, they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke sink into insignificance. They are a perfect field of cloth-of-gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery. Not even in the earlier books of the *Paradise Lost* has the great poet ever risen higher than in those parts of his controversial works in which his feelings, excited by conflict, find a vent in bursts of devotional and lyric rapture. It is, to borrow his own majestic language, 'a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies.'"—***Essay on Milton*** (1825).

Church by bishops, he suddenly interpolates an autobiographical fragment, which to us is worth more than all the rest of the book, though he probably inserted it with reluctance and with a strong sense of its irrelevance. In this he explains how it is that he, who had dedicated his life to poetry, felt constrained to join in the hurly-burly of theological disputes. He also tells the reader that the work he still hopes to achieve is such as cannot be done by a young man, because of the long and arduous preparation which is an indispensable preliminary to it. Note the spirit in which he tells of his poetic vocation, and his sense of the way to equip himself for it. He speaks first of "an inward prompting, which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let it die." And a little later he thus pledges himself to his contemporaries:—

> Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine; like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed, at mine

own peril and cost, I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them.[1]

Such was the discipline, rigorously continued from childhood almost into old age, which led to the inspiration for *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*. The notion that this intense intellectual preparation can be dispensed with would be rightly described as an imbecility if it were not even more obviously an attempt to find a justification for indolence. So far from those who preach it leaving something that after-times will not willingly let die, it is virtually certain that they can produce nothing that the future will be willing to let live;—unless, indeed, we are passing into a period of barbarism, and the world has to wait another thousand years for a rebirth of true civilization and culture.

Our own great Emerson is one of the many master-spirits who have endorsed the Platonic paradox that inspiration can only follow upon intense labour, and yet is in no wise guaranteed by it. He also, out of his own experience, is able to testify to the truth that when the inspiration comes it is of the nature of a revelation,—a disclosure of something unanticipated, unpredictable. "We distinguish the announcements of the soul, its manifestations of its own nature, by the term *Revelation*. These are always attended by the emotion of the sublime." [2] And elsewhere he writes:—

When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is

[1] Milton, *The Reason of Church-Government urged against Prelaty*, Intro. to Book ii (1641).

[2] Emerson, *The Over-Soul*, in Collected Works, vol. ii, p. 280.

not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name;—the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers.[1]

In the same spirit Matthew Arnold, who also had bought his inspiration at the price of years of labour, acknowledges the uncertainty of the celestial visitant. When all the conditions for it are prepared, it may or may not come:—

Our conduct is capable, irrespective of what we can ourselves certainly answer for, of almost infinitely different degrees of force and energy in the performance of it, of lucidity and vividness in the perception of it, of fulness in the satisfaction from it; and these degrees may vary from day to day, and quite incalculably. Facilities and felicities,—whence do they come? suggestions and stimulations,—where do they tend? Hardly a day passes but we have some experience of them. And so Henry More was led to say "that there was something about us that knew better, often, what we would be at than we ourselves." [2]

This familiar fact of experience Arnold used as one of the chief points in his demonstration of our dependence upon a "Power not ourselves." He reminds us how such a thing as a neuralgia, which on one day seems an insuperable obstacle to any sort of effective work, will on another day act as a spur, driving us to more than we could attempt without it. Such is the uniform experience of all whose inspiration is real. "The spirit bloweth

[1] *Self-Reliance, ibid.*, p. 68. [2] *Literature and Dogma*, chapter i.

where it listeth"—and when it listeth. There is no royal road to inspiration and the awakening of genius. The gods give not to those who have not laboured to win their favour; but, even among those who have, they pick and choose in a fashion that to us seems arbitrary.

There is, after all, no mystery here; or, to be more exact, there is no greater mystery here than on the lower and more familiar planes of life's activities. Every athlete knows how incalculable is the thing called "form," even after the trainer's regimen has been scrupulously followed. Every singer or actor or public speaker can testify to the same experience. No doubt there is, here as elsewhere, a definite correlation between physical and psychic conditions; only it is so obscure that it has not hitherto been ascertained. Consider, too, the element of what is called chance in the field of invention and scientific discovery. Why is it that of two men who seem equally well equipped and equally gifted by nature, one will hit upon a revolutionary discovery or an epoch-making invention and not the other, even though both are giving the same amount and degree of attention to the same subject-matter?

These facts, whether in regard to poetic inspiration, to scientific discovery, or to what is called "form" on the cricket-field, attenuate the optimistic certainty which was formerly entertained, particularly in regard to physical science, that the so-called Baconian method of observation and induction was an infallible means of arriving at rich discoveries. We find this idea surviving into the nineteenth century, and haunting the minds of many capable thinkers. Nor must we for a moment forget or under-estimate the invaluable discoveries which have been made under its influence. Our debt to empiri-

cal science is inexhaustible. The point, however, that needs to be borne in mind, especially by young people who are preparing for a scientific career, is that the mere routine grind of the experimental method, though indispensable to new discovery, is no unfailing guarantee of it. There is always the incalculable factor of the observer's inspiration. To remember this is the way to escape discouragement and to sustain hope through many a weary hour of labour.

The truth in this matter has been distorted for us by the fact that the moment a scientific worker has a new revelation he proceeds to invent a process of argument, which he offers to us as the means by which he has arrived at his discovery. He himself speedily overlooks the fact that his argument is even more of an invention than the thing he has hit upon. It is a method rather of hiding his tracks than of revealing them. Of course, his deception of us and of himself is completely unconscious. When one makes a discovery, one has to correlate it by reasoning with the rest of one's knowledge. But the psychological process of discovery is one in which the conclusion invariably comes before the premisses. You first catch your hare, and then you proceed to cook it. First you have your revelation, and then you frame a train of reasoning to legitimatize it among the family of things known.

My argument thus far, if it has succeeded at all, has established two points: first, that inspiration, though a reality, is an incalculable factor, a visitant apparently from outside oneself, upon whose coming any worthy achievement depends. The second is that the severest and most intense discipline is an indispensable pre-

requisite for the experience of inspiration. This holds universally, whether in regard to the attainment of religious truth, scientific discovery, mechanical invention, artistic felicity, or even unwonted success in gymnastics or athletics. A third point upon which I must dwell for a moment is the fact that the supreme condition for experiencing inspiration is contact with the common life, or social co-operation with others in concentration upon the tasks of the common life.

There is in the writings of Emerson a strain of individualism which would seem to contradict the proposition I have just advanced. His notion seems to be that the altitudes of life are always solitary; that "we descend to meet"; that when on quest for inspiration we "take the way from man, not to man." Any student of the facts of Emerson's life, however, will admit that my contention is consistent with them, if not with Emerson's theory. The impulse that drives the thinker into the wilderness is one which the common life has stirred within him; and that visitant whom he meets in the solitude is not indeed any man's individual selfhood, but it is the social self, the General Will. This produces a quickening of the mental activity on which the thinker has previously concentrated, by bringing it to the focal point and preventing attention from being dissipated upon extraneous matters.

Thus the mental activity of Emerson, the individualist, clearly springs out of his experience with such groups of people as those to whom he ministered as a Unitarian pastor in Boston. To these groups most of his great essays were first read, having been written in response to requests from them. The iron string in Emerson—the self-reliance, the defiance of convention and opinion—

is his reaction to the demand that he should comply with the standards of an orthodoxy none the less narrow and stereotyped because it was that of a little group of relatively advanced thinkers. It was indeed Emerson's own Unitarianism which induced his inadequate interpretation of his experience. Through concentrating upon unity, he forgot the multiplicity in unity. He did not apprehend the true doctrine of the Trinity; hence his Over-Soul apparently springs from nowhere, and is an anarchic and unaccountable manifestation. The Over-Soul is, in truth, the common mind of two or more persons animated by an identical principle. This is the experiential truth in the antique doctrine that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son. It embodies the common rational nature of many men, and consequently always manifests itself as a third factor, mightier than any of the individuals it inspires.

The facts which even Emerson's life forces upon our attention are more clearly exemplified in the genesis of the great literatures of Israel and Greece. Nothing could be clearer than that the Hebrew prophecy and psalmody grow out of the common mind of the Jewish people and result from the intense devotion of their most sensitive souls to the exigencies which the nation had to encounter. The prophet is always of the type of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Joan of Arc: a politician, inspired by patriotism. The powers developed through years of concentration enable him to see the course that his people should take, to judge what is amiss in their conduct and in their policy. When the vision becomes intense and luminous, when the certitude made poignant by love of country and love of righteousness has reached its zenith, he bursts out with counsel or condemnation in the name of the Lord.

The social source of inspiration was clear to the Greek thinkers. Aristotle, at the outset of his *Politics*, insists upon the precedence of society over the individual, and the dependence of the individual upon society. He that is so complete in himself as not to need social reinforcement and sustentation is not a man, says Aristotle, but either a beast or a god. Socrates knew that the philosophy to which he devoted his life could grow only out of continuous contact with the minds of other human beings. Despite his belief in the inward monitor, he was not accustomed to go to the solitudes to listen for its promptings. His talk with Phædrus under the plane-tree by the banks of the Ilissus was a rare departure from his customary haunting of the Athenian streets. He seldom or never went outside the walls of the city. The trees, he said, had nothing to teach him. He was willing, however, to spend whole days and nights in conversation with men immeasurably his inferiors, since he knew that it is the clash of mind upon mind which strikes the spark of new truth that blazes up into the light of further vision. Thus the great Platonic revelation, as divine as any that came to the Hebrews, is the outgrowth of one school and the inspiration of another.

Milton, although he had all the characteristics of the mental aristocrat, is, no less evidently than Plato, a product of social quickening. In the case of his prose work this is self-evident. Almost all of it is controversial: that is, it grows out of the exigencies of a time when the whole of England was divided into two schools of religious and political thought, which were in constant conflict over a long period of years. He begins with a treatise *Of Reformation in England*, and proceeds with others on Church Government. He next takes up

the cudgels in behalf of liberty of thought and publication, seeking to rescue it from the tyranny of the "new presbyter," who had promptly shown himself to be only a fresh epiphany of the "old priest." Later he controverts the book forged in the name of the executed king Charles I, and defends the people of England against foreign criticism of their action in shedding the blood of the Lord's Anointed. Among the latest of his prose writings are his tracts on *A Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, and on *The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church*. From first to last, it is a splendid manifestation of the interaction between a superbly gifted soul and that general soul which environed him and had sent him forth.

If it be urged that what is true of Milton's prose is not true of his poetry, I would answer that the subjects of his three longest poems alone suffice to prove my contention. Why should he have chosen to write of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained, save for the fact that the run of his attention was conditioned by that of the party with which he had co-operated? His age was the century of Puritanism, of Hebraism, of full-blown Protestantism, with its mechanical scheme of salvation. It was the concentration of the common mind on these ideas that caused the concentration upon them of the mind of Milton. By native temperament he was rather Greek than Hebrew, and he expressed his own bent much more clearly in the *Allegro*, the *Penseroso*, and the *Comus* than in the fairy-tale of Adam and the myth of the Temptation of Christ.

The proof that inspiration can come only after intense study can be given negatively as well as positively. The latter side of the argument I have attempted to present

by instancing the apprenticeship of the greatest minds. The former can be made evident by considering the inspirations foisted upon the world by people who have not undergone the hard toil of preparation. They are in general worthless. This is the essential defect in our modern habit of mental laziness, which opposes intuition to intellect and disparages reasoning as inimical to inspiration. Consider the fantastic result of the Mormon attempt to produce a new religion on the lines of the theory of supernaturalism invented to account for the revelation given to the Hebrews. Whoever has read the *Book of Mormon* knows that the only good things it contains are its extensive plagiarisms from the Bible. Whatever has been concocted by its author under the influence of his inspiration is of no value.

Christian Science is not morally and intellectually defective in the same sense or to the same degree as Mormonism. Nor does the juxtaposition of a criticism of Mrs. Eddy's cult with that of Joseph Smith imply any invidious comparison. Yet the philosophic feebleness both of Christian Science and of that schism from it called the Science of Being, are due to the fact that the founders of these cults have misunderstood the nature of inspiration. They discounted intellectual work. They cultivated a passive resignation to the dictates of the spiritual visitant. They reproduced the phenomenon of "speaking with tongues," against which St. Paul's common sense forced him to protest. The result is that their books are a mere mass of words, darkening counsel without knowledge. They have seized upon a fragment of truth and imagined that it fills the universe. They have converted this half-truth into a whole error through the omission of its complementary truth. By the over-

emphasis of their fragment of truth they have succeeded only in setting up a religion for invalids. What the world needs is a religion for those who do not need to waste their time in feeling their muscles and taking their temperature, but are free to do battle with those social evils, the existence of which Christian Science very unwisely denies.

The necessity for mental discipline as a propædeutic to inspiration is illustrated also in the history of the Society of Friends. That noble movement grew out of the same stirring activity of the social mind which produced the prose of Milton. George Fox's intellectual activity, though narrow and one-sided, was intense and continuous. The most eminent of the early Quakers, such men as Barclay and Penn, were learned beyond the average, according to the standards of their time. Unfortunately the Quaker conviction of the indispensableness of the Inner Light led to the error of confusing the indispensable with the all-sufficient. It was forgotten that, while water is necessary to life, yet one cannot live by water alone. The Inner Light, which seems to wax and wane independently of the will, cannot even begin to shine into the dark places unless it has been prepared for "by labour and intense study." The Quakers made a mistake in their refusal to establish a regular ministry. It is not enough to wait for the Spirit; one has to make ready for its coming. The disparagement of conscious effort in these matters is a part of the general blunder of supernaturalism.

The most elaborate philosophy of inspiration current to-day is that of M. Bergson, which, as already indicated, is being wrongly used to disparage intellect and intellectual discipline. M. Bergson has sought to do justice

to the fact of inspiration, to admit it among the other truths of our mental and psychic life. In order to do this, he was compelled to attempt a definition and demarcation of the function of the discursive intellect. Now to show that there are limits to any special activity is not in the least to disparage the activity within those limits. To admit the existence of art as well as science is not to attack science. To say that the artist reaches his results by a course different from that of the man of science (or at least from that which the man of science is generally supposed to follow) is no reflection either upon the artist's results or those of the scientific worker.

This is really what Bergson has done. The head and front of his offending is that he has declared it necessary to combine the procedure of the artist with that of the man of science in order to attain a full and true vision of reality. Indeed, so far from justifying the procedure of our anarchic Cubists and Futurists in art and politics, M. Bergson's philosophy is in truth the most complete antidote to their pretensions. For it implies that the sphere of intuition or inspiration lies *beyond* that of the intellect; and accordingly the frontiers of the intellect must be reached and over-passed before the realm of inspiration can be entered.

Now, what is this but a reassertion of what we have learned from Plato? It is quite true that when the new vision comes, "it is not by any known or accustomed way." It comes after but not merely because of intellectual preparation. It is *post hoc*, but not *propter hoc*. I do not, of course, lose sight of the fact that the relation of the mental discipline to the inspiration is causative: to deny that would be insane. My point is that the

inspiration is an effect not of the mental discipline alone, but of the combination of this with a complex of other factors which (at present) is unanalyzable.

If this account of the conditions of inspiration be sound, we are now perhaps in a position to attempt a rough definition of the power whose antecedents we have traced. Inspiration, then, let us say, is *insight transmuted into purpose and commanding the services of the intellect.* Insight alone is not inspiration; nor is volition without insight. Intellectual activity alone falls far short of it. But when the will has been purified and quickened by insight, and when the intellect has been so disciplined that it is able to serve as the supple and facile instrument of the purified will, then—in that threefold unity—the celestial visitant appears. Even then it *seems* uncaused, accidental; because we are never able to foresee the precise assemblage of the conditions of its manifestation.

This definition of inspiration indicates the way to attain it. The precedent conditions are: a fervent desire for the best, a humble awareness of one's shortcomings, and intense labour to qualify oneself for it. Such is the philosophy of Plato; such, too, is the meaning of the great picture of inspiration which we owe to the Hebrew Isaiah. When the Spirit takes him into the presence of the Lord of Hosts and his seraphic sentinels, he cries out,—

> Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and

he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.[1]

We cannot become the fit champions of the ideal, the messengers of the highest, until the uncleanness of our lips has been burnt away by painful contact with the divine fire; until we have drilled and disciplined ourselves out of our pettinesses and self-centred promptings, and out of intellectual arrogance and dogmatic certitude. Only when littleness and self-sufficiency have been thus purged away, only when after intense struggle we have attained the divine vision, can we respond to the challenge of that eternal reason which presses to actualize itself in man, with the words, "Here am I; send me."

The inspired man makes the mass of us uncomfortable, because we cannot live at his level of self-abnegation. The great void in our lives is the absence of inspiration. We feel the need of the miserable luxuries that enslave us because we cannot breathe the upper air, and the view from the heights is hidden from us. We live in the passing moment. We are querulous and wilful because our will has not been caught up and quickened by purposes that eternalize us, dwarfing into insignificance all outer things. He who has been thus transfigured is the only man to be envied, the only one whom, whatever he suffer, we never need pity.

Even for the most highly favoured, the moments of vision are rare; but the strength they impart sustains the seer through all his after days. As Arnold has sung:

[1] Isaiah vi, 5–8. (R. V.)

We cannot kindle when we will
  The fire that in the heart resides.
The spirit bloweth and is still;
  In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

He who has thus toiled upward in the night, he who "by labour and intense study" has clarified his intellect and purified his will, is the only man who can truly be called master of his fate. Because he can be neither bribed nor terrified, the world is at his feet.

CHAPTER VII

IMMORTALITY: A STUDY IN PLATO

If it should happen that among my readers there are some hitherto mute, inglorious Shakespeares, I would venture to suggest to them that one of the plays for which the world is still waiting is that magnificent tragedy in three acts, to be entitled, *The Death of Socrates*. It was by a very unfortunate oversight that Shakespeare (whom the high gods probably sent into the world for the special purpose of writing this play) omitted to do it. Perhaps it was because neither North nor Holland happened to translate Plato; perhaps because Shakespeare felt that the theme was too sublime, even for him. Yet it may be that the intention of the gods has been not frustrated, but only deferred. It may be that, in the fulness of time, after we have recovered from the age of Ibsen and Bernard Shaw, the tragedy of *The Death of Socrates* will get itself written and acted.

Very little actual invention will be needed by its author. The materials and the characters are at hand in the Platonic trilogy.[1] The first act will present the trial and condemnation of Socrates, with his superb contempt of Court, his refusal to say or do anything which might imply that the Court owed him aught save honour and respect, or that an acquittal by them, or even the granting of maintenance in the Prytaneum, would be an unmerited favour to him. The second act

[1] The *Apology*, the *Crito* and the *Phaedo*.

will take place in the prison, at an early hour of morning; the curtain rising upon the scene where the aged Crito watches by the bed of the sleeping Socrates, astonished that his friend can rest so soundly, seeing that on the morrow he is to die. The sacred ship from Delos has been sighted off Sunium, and with her arrival the life of Socrates must end, as the life of Meleager ends with the consuming of the brand that flamed when he was born. The substance of this second act will be the attempt of Crito to induce Socrates to escape, and the statement by Socrates of his reasons for refusing.

The third act will set upon the stage the tale told by Phaedo to Echecrates of Phlius. The day is that on which Socrates is to drink the poison. From early morning his friends are about him, and they spend the day in discussing with him the question of the soul's immortality. In the course of the talk various little incidents of which the dramatist can make good use occur or are alluded to: as when, for example, Socrates is represented as stroking the curly hair of his beloved disciple Phaedo; and again when the jailer comes weeping to tell his illustrious prisoner that the hour of his death has struck, and Socrates, serene and unmoved, turns to his heart-broken companions with the remark, "How charming the man is!" Then, with the rays of the setting sun falling upon him like the pointing hand of God, the wisest man of his age drinks the hemlock and sets forth on the high adventure called death.

If the next Shakespeare should agree with his predecessor in thinking such a theme too sublime for dramatic presentation, one's hope of seeing this great play written will be disappointed or indefinitely deferred. But meantime one may remind the Michael Angelos of

twentieth-century America that no theme has ever been considered too sacred for the painter to depict. An attempt has indeed been made to put on canvas the scene of the death of Socrates, but unfortunately the artist shared the prevalent illusion that Greek men were like stone statues, only less alive. When the predestined painter of this scene arrives, he will be one who recognizes that Athenian gentlemen of the fourth century B. C. were exactly like the most cultivated sons of the twentieth century of the Christian era. He will therefore seek his models not in the British Museum or the Louvre, or in the shop of an antique dealer, but in—let us say—the literary clubs of Boston or London, or in the Senate at Washington.

But to our theme:

It is well to bear in mind, when reading the words of Plato concerning immortality, that he was not confused by the mental muddle created in modern times by the attempt to furnish a substitute for it. He knew, what the unsophisticated consciousness has always known, that the immortality which men desire is personal or nothing. It means the continuance (with whatever development) of the self-conscious individual soul. If it is not this, it is not immortality. The attempt of Positivism to deny this, and at the same time to provide the same consolation, by talking about the incorporation of the (non-existent) soul into the Great Being Humanity, if taken seriously (and there actually are some people who take it seriously), is a strange piece of intellectual jugglery. It is like the construction sometimes placed upon the Apostles' Creed, according to which "conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary" means, "conceived of the carpenter Joseph, born of the married

woman Mary"; and "I believe in the resurrection of the body" means, "I deny the resurrection of the body, but I rather fancy that the soul may be immortal."

I would not even seem to disparage that noble aspiration which is expressed by George Eliot in *The Choir Invisible.* "To make undying music in the world," to "be to other souls the cup of strength in some great agony," to leave to after-times "the sweet presence of a good diffused, and in diffusion ever more intense,"—this is the sole aim worthy of the life of man. But to call it *immortality* is to use language with reckless ambiguity. An influence is not a person; it is not a consciousness; and a personal consciousness is the only possible subject of the kind of life to which this desire relates. To anybody who longs for personal continuance, the surrogate arrangement offered by Positivism is a positive insult. If you do not believe in conscious life after death, and some bereaved friend comes to you for consolation, be brave enough to tell what you really think. Do not say, "I can offer you an excellent substitute," because you cannot. Do not imitate those vegetarian restaurants in London, where they give you a hash-up of beans and fried potatoes, and call it steak. Do not say in effect, "Of course you want to be assured that your friend is alive, and that you and he will meet again, whereas he is really dead and done for; but you can easily lull yourself into believing that it is very much the same as if he were still living." In other words, do not pretend that a figure of speech is a statement of fact. We can permit the poet to speak of "those immortal dead who live again in lives made better by their presence," only upon the strict understanding that this is not to be offered as a consolation to anybody who is seeking the kind of com-

fort of which this doctrine is *a denial.* Such persons need first to be weaned from their vain yearning,—vain, because the assurance they seek is unattainable,—and led up to that nobler but quite different faith to which George Eliot's spirit can appeal.

Of Plato's attempt to find a rational basis for his belief in personal survival, Matthew Arnold speaks almost with asperity: "By what futilities the demonstration of our immortality may be attempted is to be seen in Plato's *Phaedo.*" Mr. Arnold then proceeds to indulge in a futility of his own:—

> Man's natural desire for continuance, however little it may be worth as a scientific proof of our immortality, is at least a proof a thousand times stronger than any such demonstration. The want of solidity in such argument is so palpable that one scarcely cares to turn a steady regard upon it at all.[1]

It may be so. We may never be able to find, on either side of the question, arguments that will sustain one moment's steady regard; and yet the everlasting riddle will always continue to be propounded. Although we have no data which could convert our feeling of what is probable into a knowledge of what is actual, we shall continue to dispute about this subject, because we must; and after we have recognized the "futilities" of Plato and of Arnold for what they are, we shall proceed to invent fresh ones of our own. Those whose faith in immortality is shocked or shaken by Arnold's criticism may at least find comfort by remembering that nothing that Plato or anybody else, down to the most ranting

[1] *Literature and Dogma,* chap. xii.

revivalist or the most feeble-minded *séance*-haunter, ever offered as a proof of immortality, can equal in futility the arguments advanced in recent times as proof that man is not immortal. When scientific "philosophers" or their popularizers tell us that the human soul is "a function of the nervous system," or that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile," we feel that the wildest non-sequitur in the *Phaedo* is by comparison logical and rational. With people who can believe that the subject is derived from the object; that the spirit is created by its instruments; that the knower is a product of a few of the items which he knows;—with such people it is difficult to hold serious argument. One cannot but anticipate that they will shortly undertake, with a specially powerful microscope, to show us a little bit of human kindness, or a fragment detached from a chain of argument. Why not, if thought is a secretion of the brain?

If we are to attempt a serious discussion, worthy of the high mood of the *Phaedo*, we must begin by recognizing the absolute mystery in the presence of which we stand, and which confronts us when we gaze within ourselves. We cannot to-day say more than was said nearly three hundred years ago by Sir Thomas Browne: "We are men, and we know not how." He is the victim of an illusion who thinks that the description of the development of the body which modern science gives us, is an explanation either of the body or of the mind. There are, strictly speaking, no explanations in science; there are only descriptions and correlations of the given. If I stand in spell-bound astonishment before the fact that I am the son of my father and the father of my son, my astonishment is not to be dispelled by a mere restatement of the fact of the relationship, however full of detail

it may be. Now, science is little more than such a detailed restatement of facts, many of which are superficially familiar to common sense. Science can tell us much of the *make* of the world, but nothing of its *making*. To questions that begin with the word "How?" it can reply at great length; but to questions that ask "Why?" it has no answers.

Men had marvelled, for example, at the mystery of creation. Then came science, substituting the word evolution for the word creation. What it meant thereby (as we saw in Chapter III) was that the force or forces by which observed changes in the world have come about, are inherent in the world, and not acting upon it from "outside." This, however, is only a convenient hypothesis, unproved and unprovable, but serviceable as a simplification of practical problems. To those who have erected it into a complete system of mythology, the virtual meaning of which is that Evolution is the name of God, there is no mystery; but for the rest of us, who cannot so easily succeed in deluding ourselves with names, there is nothing for it but the frank recognition that all that was mysterious to Plato remains equally mysterious to us. The essence of the mystery is not any special collocation of particular facts, but the very possibility of there being such a thing as knowledge,—the possibility of the co-existence and connection of thought and thing, of the multiplicity of minds in relation with each other through a world which serves as their instrument of communication.

But Man is magnificent as well as mysterious. We have been brow-beaten by the conclusions of physical science into thinking of him as merely one among the animals, subject to their vicissitudes and to the blind

play of uncontrollable forces. The old estimates of his dignity and greatness sound foolish and presumptuous to our ears. We are too modest to realize that our very ability to raise the question of our kinship with the lower animals is itself a proof of our essential difference from them. This view, of course, is consistent with the fullest recognition of the descent of the body from animal ancestors. I am not in the least disputing the Darwinian argument on that side. But if we could shake ourselves free from the gross illusions of the materialistic standpoint, we should find nothing strange or unwarrantable in that estimate which places man not among the animals but among the gods. The truth is under-stated rather than exceeded in those beautiful lines of Mr. Watson's:—

> We are children of splendour and flame,
> Of shuddering also, and tears;
> Magnificent out of the dust we came,
> And abject from the spheres.[1]

The under-statement here lies in the possible implication that the duality of man's nature intersects the line of cleavage between body and spirit, and that the spirit, or some part of it, came, like the body, out of the dust. To this extent Mr. Watson seems to side with the materialistic biologists, whose whole procedure is vitiated through their mistaking of conditions for causes—an error which was so completely exposed by Plato in the *Phaedo*[2] that it ought never to be made again by any thinker claiming to be scientific.

[1] William Watson's *Ode in May*.

[2] "I found my philosopher altogether forsaking mind or any other principle of order, but having recourse to air, and ether, and water, and other eccentricities. I might compare him to a person who began by

It is refreshing and encouraging to turn from those biological inquiries which humiliate man by seeking his antecedents among the apes and in the dust, to that higher and truer account of him penned by Sir Thomas Browne. He speaks rhetorically of himself, but his words are true of all men:

Now for my life, it is a miracle of thirty years, which to relate were not a history, but a piece of poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable. For the world, I count it not an inn, but an hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in. The world that I regard is myself; it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on: for the other, I

maintaining generally that mind is the cause of the actions of Socrates, but who, when he endeavoured to explain the causes of my several actions in detail, went on to show that I sit here because my body is made up of bones and muscles; and the bones, as he would say, are hard and have ligaments which divide them, and the muscles are elastic, and they cover the bones, which have also a covering or environment of flesh and skin which contains them; and as the bones are lifted at their joints by the contraction or relaxation of the muscles, I am able to bend my limbs, and this is why I am sitting here in a curved posture: that is what he would say, and he would have a similar explanation of my talking to you, which he would attribute to sound, and air, and hearing, and he would assign ten thousand other causes of the same sort, forgetting to mention the true cause, which is, that the Athenians have thought fit to condemn me, and accordingly I have thought it better and more right to remain here and undergo my sentence; for I am inclined to think that these muscles and bones of mine would have gone off to Megara or Bœotia,—by the Dog of Egypt! they would, if they had been guided only by their own idea of what was best, and if I had not chosen as the better and nobler part, instead of playing truant and running away, to undergo any punishment which the State inflicts. There is surely a strange confusion of causes and conditions in all this. It may be said, indeed, that without bones and muscles and the other parts of the body I cannot execute my purposes. But to say that I do as I do because of them, and that this is the way in which mind acts, and not from the choice of the best, is a very careless and idle mode of speaking."—§§ 98–99.

use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude; for I am above Atlas's shoulders. The earth is a point not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind. That surface that tells the heavens it hath an end cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty. Though the number of the arc do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm, or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun. . . . He that understands not thus much hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man.[1]

The problem of immortality, then, is not whether man's body contains some rarefied physical essence which at death can rise from it like an exhalation and continue to subsist without it. We grant to the biologist that no part of the body survives; the resolution of the physical frame at death into its component solids, fluids and gases is complete. He has very kindly told us, in learned language, what we knew before. Upon the problem with which we are concerned, his researches are inherently incapable of throwing any light whatever. Our quest is as to the fate of the essential man, who is non-physical and non-spatial; and our first question is whether he is also extra-temporal.

There are, indeed, two ideas fused together in the ordinary conception of immortality. That word is com-

[1] Sir T. Browne, *Religio Medici*, Pt. ii, § 11.

monly treated as synonymous with eternity. We speak indifferently of immortal life and of eternal life, and we do not usually trouble ourselves to inquire whether this procedure is legitimate. The two ideas should, however, be kept distinct. The one is the vague popular notion of indefinite continuance; the other has no relation to continuance. It is a qualitative, not a quantitative conception. The immortal life of ordinary religious aspiration is simply a reproduction of the same type of existence that the phenomenal man passes through before death. It is an indefinite prolongation of that life through endless time. It sets aside the question whether man is truly in time, or whether time is, so to speak, in man.

Now one may, as a matter of faith or by logical necessity, but without any dogmatism, believe in an eternal spiritual order, and yet remain unconvinced as to immortality, or as to the possibility of a life after death which should be something less than immortal. I have elsewhere pointed out that even a scientific proof (if such a thing were possible) that man continues to live after death would in no wise prove that he will live for ever.[1] To believe in an eternal order is to believe that the spirit of man is *now* outside of time and above succession. One may hold, with Kant, that time is a form of thought—one of those functions of the understanding by which, as he said, it "makes nature." In that case, man does not begin and end in time, but time begins and ends in him. Or one may believe, with Bergson, that time should be expressed in terms of duration, which is not that of the body, but of that noumenal

[1] *Criticisms of Life*, chap. iv, p. 137. This argument was of course anticipated by Plato. See below, p. 211.

force by which all living bodies are organized, and the fate of which is not involved in their vicissitudes. According to Bergson's view, there is nothing with which the duration of man's life can be compared, except the universe itself in its totality. We think we measure ourselves by units of a homogeneous medium called time. But in order to do this, we have to delude ourselves into thinking that we have performed the impossible conjuring-trick of objectifying the subject. It is only what William James calls the empirical ego, as distinguished from the pure ego, which can thus be measured: the *me*, not the *I*. The pure self overspans any succession which it measures, embracing both its ends; otherwise the measurement would be impossible. Now, in doing this we necessarily transform the succession into a *simultaneity*. A period of time, if I am thus to deal with it, must become for my consciousness a unitary object. The fifteen years of the twentieth century which have thus far elapsed are gathered up in our memory into such a unity. The year 1901 and the year 1915 co-exist in the mind.

A simple way of bringing home the paradox involved in the idea of time is to divide time, as common sense always does, into past, present and future. We spring from the past; we live in the present; and we are continually reaching forward into the future. But what and where is the past? It does not exist. And the future? It is to be, we say; but this is an indirect way of admitting that it also does not exist. Baffled, we seek to grasp at the present; but it proves as elusive as past and future. The word, as it leaves my lips, is no longer present; it has slipped into the non-existent past. What then is the reality of this time, which is everywhere and nowhere,

which is always and never; of which two-thirds do not exist and the other third cannot be grasped?

In an earlier chapter I attempted a distinction between existence and reality which I must here recall to the reader's memory. Existence, I suggested, should be regarded as the purely intellectual category; reality as the volitional. That which does not exist may yet be real. If so, its reality consists in the fact that it satisfies some inherent need of the spirit. All ideals are of this nature. Everybody can see, for example, that it would be absurd to say that justice exists; but nobody hesitates for a moment to declare that justice is intensely real. Or, if any pessimist should choose to deny this, I would take the liberty of reminding him that in the act of doing so he has affirmed the reality of injustice, which equally cannot be thought of as existing.

Time, then, may without absurdity be called non-existent but real: so too may space and causality,—both of which ideas, when analyzed, are found to be as elusive as time. We differentiate the unbroken continuum of the senses into an ordered universe by means of the intuition of space; and by means of that mental creation or rational function called time we succeed in distributing the world of events into an intelligible sequence. Past, present and future have no more existence apart from us than have the lines of latitude and longitude, which we draw on our maps, in the world which those maps depict. Like them, time is a creation of the mind to meet its own needs.

Now the consequence of admitting this is the recognition that the spirit of man, being outside of time, is outside of succession. It does not move forward to grasp the future; the stream of events flows towards it and is

absorbed in it. But the common idea of immortality, as we have seen, is simply that of indefinite succession. In these terms we continue to pose the problem, because the transcendent order of reality, to which the essential man belongs, is and must remain incomprehensible to us. It is not, however, inapprehensible. We cannot present it to ourselves in conceptual form, because (not being able to jump out of our skins) we cannot objectify the subject, the pure ego. But it is of this timeless reality that we should be thinking when we use the words *eternity* and *eternal*.

Our intellectual difficulty in the matter is to some extent helped by poetic pictures, though even these are apt to be misleading. Shelley, in an inspired moment, compared life to "a dome of many-coloured glass" which "stains the white radiance of eternity." A Hebrew psalmist said of God, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." [1] In the Fourth Gospel there is placed upon the lips of Christ the bold paradox, "Before Abraham was, I am." [2] Now, in the strict sense, the words of the psalmist in reference to God are true of man. A thousand years in everybody's sight are but as yesterday when it is past. The comparison is not in respect of the duration of yesterday, but in respect of the simultaneity into which the thousand years, like yesterday, are fused, in order that they may become present as a unitary object to consciousness. So with the words of the Johannine Christ: they too are true of everybody. Man is before Abraham was, because in his consciousness is embraced the time-span from before the day of Abraham to the present moment. Time has no other assignable reality

[1] Ps. xc, 4. [2] John viii, 58.

than as a constituent and instrument of consciousness. It is the duality of our nature—the fact that as objects we form part of the series which as subjects we create—that causes our confusion, breaking up the "white radiance" into the many colours of the dome.

We may think of eternity under the image of a vertical line, cutting across the horizontal line called time. At the point of intersection stands man, a member of both series; the only point at which there is in time the gleam of eternity.

This notion of man as non-successive (whether in this life or after death) is, as I have admitted, inconceivable. But we know *why* it is so; and the inconceivable (as science has frequently demonstrated) is not the impossible. The only question is whether the notion is forced upon us by the logical analysis of our own nature and of the conditions of knowledge. If it is (as I believe to be the case), we cannot refuse to entertain it. In whatever direction thought proceeds, it always conducts us to the inconceivable. I would claim for the view here suggested that it is logically necessitated, is self-consistent and consistent with the data of experience; whereas the opinion which reduces the soul of man to phenomenal rank, regarding it as a product of an independent time-process, involves a series of gratuitous and unprofitable inconceivabilities.

The futilities complained of by Arnold in the *Phaedo* are due not merely to the abstruse nature of the subject it discusses, but to the imperfection of Plato's dialectic, which belongs, as Professor Jowett reminds us, to the age before logic and psychology. Already, indeed, we have encountered the further difficulty, remarked by Simmias towards the close of the argument, which "arises

necessarily out of the greatness of the subject and the feebleness of man." The effort of Socrates to prove the pre-existence of the soul by means of the doctrine of ideas imparted before birth,[1] is one of the futilities. It is easy for us now to say, in Kantian language, that not explicit knowledge, but only its presuppositions, are evolved by reason *a priori*, and to distinguish between the *a priori* and the innate. We cannot be satisfied by saying, with Cebes, that "if you put a question to a person in a right way, he will give a true answer of himself; but how could he do this unless there were knowledge and right reason already in him?" For we should be met with the retort that "putting a question in a right way" means putting it in terms that *contain* the answer, and that to identify knowledge with "right reason" is to beg the whole question. We regard the knowledge developed by such interrogations not as reminiscent, but as a new creation, produced on the spot by the thinker through the normal operation of his rational powers. If knowledge could begin in the soul before birth, why should it not begin in this life? And if it can begin in this life, what need have we of the hypothesis of pre-existence to account for its origin?

Nor can we do otherwise than accept Arnold's epithet as a true description of the argument by which Socrates seeks to prove that opposites are generated out of each other, and therefore that life is born of death.[2] That argument confounds succession with generation, and is thus an instance of the fallacy of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. His later attempt to demonstrate the existence of qualities out of relation, and to show that greatness and smallness, oddness and evenness, are the causes of particular

[1] *Phaedo*, § 73. [2] *Ibid.*, §§ 70–72.

things being great and small, odd and even, is, in similar fashion, a palpable hypostatization of mere words. In all this we see the great workman struggling with inefficient tools.

We cannot say, indeed, that the possibility of pre-natal existence falls with the collapse of Plato's argument. That doctrine is an hypothesis of which we have no need, because we can, as we think, explain the facts of our present knowledge without invoking it. It remains conceivable that birth may be but an interruption of our life, by which continuity is broken and consciousness becomes tangential to its former course. While recognizing this, however, we agree with Arnold that an argument which assumes it is a futility. It is an attempt to explain the unknown by the still-more-unknown.

But the whole point of the *Phaedo* is missed if we do not see that its purpose, from beginning to end, is ethical rather than metaphysical. What Plato is interested in is that quality of the soul by which it can realize its eternity. The notion of the prolongation of individual consciousness after death is for him confessedly a myth: that is, a guess. The epistemological and other considerations introduced by Socrates are altogether subordinate to the ethical purpose of the conversation. The keynote is struck at the beginning, in the answer of Socrates to the question why the philosopher desires death. It is because death liberates him from a thraldom from which, throughout his life, he has been trying to escape.[1]

[1] "If we would have pure knowledge of anything, we must be quit of the body, and the soul in herself must behold all things in themselves: then I suppose that we shall attain that which we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers, and that is wisdom; not while we live, but after death, as the argument shows; for if while in company with the body the soul cannot have pure knowledge, one of two things seems to follow—

The Socrates who here argues for the immortality of the soul is the same man who, before his judges, had taken the agnostic attitude. To them he had argued that whether death is a dreamless sleep or the entrance to a new life, it is in either case a good. Because the man whose soul is clothed with the armour of virtue is invulnerable to the shafts of chance, no evil can befall him, either in life or after death. His reconciliation to his lot is therefore not conditional upon a balancing of external goods against external ills. He has attained to that qualitative perfection which is the highest conceivable fruition even of an everlasting life. The production of a soul like his is the only end which could make an immortal life desirable. Since its perfection is intensive, not extensive, it is independent of duration. Though it were manifested but for a moment, the spirit of Socrates is as great as it could be if it continued to exist for ever; for, as Aristotle says, "it will not do to say that the eternity of the essential good makes it to be more good; for what has lasted white ever so long is no whiter than what lasts but for a day." [1] Plato's interest, like that of all truly religious moralists, is in the whiteness, not in its duration. The *Phaedo* is there not to prove that men are immortal, but to make

either knowledge is not to be attained at all, or, if at all, after death. For then, and not till then, the soul will be in herself alone, and without the body. In this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible concern or interest in the body, and are not saturated with the bodily nature, but remain pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us. And then the foolishness of the body will be cleared away, and we shall be pure and hold converse with other pure souls, and know of ourselves the clear light everywhere; and this is surely the light of truth. For no impure thing is allowed to approach the pure."—*Phaedo*, §§ 66–67.

[1] *Ethics*, Book 1, chap. 3.

them realize that they are eternal. They can in this life develop in themselves essential and substantive wisdom and goodness. These are, indeed, indestructible, and may persist in the individualized consciousness in which they are developed; but in any case they are the supreme values, for the sake of which alone an endless existence could be worth while.

The primary purpose, then, of Socrates is to teach his followers to emancipate themselves from bondage to their bodily affections and desires. This he does by exhibiting, with unparalleled keenness of moral discrimination, the difference between the prudential self-abnegation of the philistine and the truly ethical self-discipline of the enlightened lover of virtue.[1] The philistine, as he points out, forgoes one bodily pleasure in order that he may enjoy another. He is, in the seemingly paradoxical words of Socrates, "temperate because he is intemperate." Thus the man who abandons certain luxuries of drink or diet, not for the sake of the spiritual liberation which results, but in order that he may live the longer to gratify hunger and thirst, has made no progress in virtue at all. Even the man who acts bravely to escape death because he fears death, is, according to Socrates, "courageous only from fear." This is not a disparagement of prudential self-abnegation, except in so far as it makes self-evident the inferiority of such conduct to that of the philosopher. If I abandon one class of pleasures because there is another class of pleasures which I must have, my thraldom to pleasure at the end of the process is as complete as at the beginning. Such an exchange is the exchange of commerce, not of virtue:—

[1] *Phaedo*, § 68.

But in the true exchange there is a purging away of all these things, and temperance, and justice, and courage, and wisdom herself, are a purgation of them. And I conceive that the founders of the mysteries had a real meaning and were not mere triflers when they intimated in a figure long ago that he who passed unsanctified and uninitiated into the world below will live in a slough, but that he who arrives there after initiation and purification will dwell with the gods. For "many," as they say in the mysteries, "are the thyrsus-bearers, but few are the mystics,"—meaning, as I interpret the words, the true philosophers. In the number of whom I have been seeking, according to my ability, to find a place during my whole life; whether I have sought in a right way or not, and whether I have succeeded or not, I shall truly know in a little while, if God will, when I myself arrive in the other world: that is my belief.[1]

Thus the pursuit of virtue requires us first of all to discriminate between empirical goods and those qualitative goods of the soul which are eternal. The latter are substantive, whereas the former are only adjectival. This is what Emerson has in mind when he speaks of becoming "not virtuous, but virtue." With this doctrine the *Phaedo* begins and ends; and the maintenance of it is the real purpose of the long, and somewhat unprofitable, discussion which intervenes between the two ethical affirmations.

The utilitarian may be affronted by the suggestion that the self-abnegation which looks to future pleasure is not virtuous, and may declare that Socrates is advocating an idle and purposeless asceticism. What other reason can there be, he may ask, for giving up drink, for reducing one's diet, for living in chastity, than the

[1] *Phaedo*, § 69.

maintenance or recovery of one's health and physical fitness? This is a perfectly natural question to be put in an age which has invented a new religion for the sole purpose of making the body healthful,—though, to be sure, that religion offers the bewildering paradox of denying the existence of the body as a means of securing its health. Our answer must be that health is good not only in itself, but also as a means to ends which are more important than it, and for the sake of which health itself, and even life, must at need be sacrificed. It is these ends that Socrates has in view. The self-abnegation he inculcates is quite consistent with utilitarianism, unless the utilitarian can disprove the worth of the end sought. This, however, he cannot do; for the good that Socrates seeks is the realization of the inherent powers of the human spirit, which are hampered or frustrated by its slavery to bodily cravings. Now the unconditional acceptance of every rational creature's claim to true self-realization is the intuition upon which utilitarianism reposes.[1]

The ascetics of the degenerate period of Christian history would have been horrified by the assertion that spiritual perfection is an inherent and inalienable attribute of man's nature which can be actualized in this life. Their attempt to placate the devil whom they mistook for God, by all sorts of insane and insanitary

[1] Cp. the discussion of the intuitional basis of Utilitarianism in Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*, especially Book iii, chap. xiii. He there says, "There being . . . no actual desire . . . for the general happiness, the proposition that the general happiness is desirable cannot be in this way established: so that there is a gap in the expressed argument, which can, I think, only be filled by some such proposition as that which I have above tried to exhibit as the intuition of Rational Benevolence."—P. 388, seventh edition.

mortifications of the flesh, is a superstitious caricature of the Socratic discipline. For Socrates held that many kinds of bodily pleasures may be indulged in, provided one has so completely mastered the craving for them that it no longer hinders the development and the free functioning of one's mental and spiritual powers. We have seen [1] that he could drink deeper than any of his companions: but he was never drunk, and could go on with the hardest kind of thinking when the rest of the assembly were unable to stand or speak.

The ultimate Greek ideal, to be sure, is the same as that of Christianity at its highest. Both Aristotle and Plato are convinced that the noblest state of man is that of *contemplation*. To *see*, with the eye of the soul, perfect goodness, truth and beauty, as they are in their very nature and pure essence, and not as momentary gleams breaking through the darkness of the sense-world,—this is the Beatific Vision, and the long-sustained activity that conducts to it is the noblest pursuit open to man. It is not formally different from the "end of man" as defined in the Westminster Confession: "To know God and enjoy Him for ever." The real difference is that the Westminster Confession lost sight of the fact that God is nothing but Goodness, Truth and Beauty, whilst the Greek masters kept it always in mind.

Nothing in the *Phaedo* is more captivating than the divine condescension of Socrates to the confusion and weakness of Simmias and Cebes, who in a very human fashion confess to the instinctive horror of death after they have admitted the force of arguments designed to prove the indestructibility of the soul. It is difficult to live long on the mountain-peaks of philosophic insight;

[1] *Ante*, p. 128, *n.* 1.

and the two Thebans are "haunted, like children, with a fear that when the soul leaves the body, the wind may really blow her away and scatter her." Cebes, with a smile, demands that Socrates shall argue them out of their fears: "And yet, strictly speaking, they are not our fears, but *there is a child within us*, to whom death is a sort of hobgoblin." Long and hard is the discipline by which we can be emancipated from the irrational fears of that child within. Every natural craving prompts us to cling to the bodily life, to linger among "the warm precincts of the cheerful day." In spite of our philosophic conviction of the spiritual nature of the soul, we yet have vague pictures of it as being "blown about the desert dust, or sealed within the iron hills." Socrates, using the language of accommodation, argues that it is only compounds which can be dissolved and scattered, but that the soul is single and simple, and therefore irreducible. He is here using a physical analogy—though without saying so. May we say that an irrational argument is legitimate for allaying an irrational terror? The fear admitted by Cebes assumes an altogether self-contradictory notion of the spirit. It supposes that the soul is *in* the body: that is, that it is material and spatial. How else could it be blown before the wind?

Recovering from their terror, the two interlocutors proceed to test Socrates by offering further objections. Simmias urges that the soul is related to the body as the harmony to the lyre. He is promptly disposed of by Socrates with the retort that a harmony cannot be "prior to the elements which compose" it, whereas Simmias has already admitted that the soul exists before the body. Cebes suggests that, though the soul is more enduring than its physical instrument, there is no proof

that it may not cease to exist after it has worn out a number of bodies:—

The parallel which I will suppose is that of an old weaver, who dies, and after his death somebody says: He is not dead, he must be alive: and he appeals to the coat which he himself wove and wore, and which is still whole and undecayed. And then he proceeds to ask of someone who is incredulous, whether a man lasts longer, or the coat which is in use and wear; and when he is answered that a man lasts far longer, thinks that he has thus certainly demonstrated the survival of the man, who is the more lasting, because the less lasting remains. But that, Simmias, as I would beg you to observe, is not the truth; everyone sees that he who talks thus is talking nonsense. For the truth is, that this weaver, having worn and woven many such coats, though he outlived several of them, was himself outlived by the last; but this is surely very far from proving that a man is slighter and weaker than a coat. Now the relation of the body to the soul may be expressed in a similar figure; for you may say with reason that the soul is lasting, and the body weak and short-lived in comparison. And every soul may be said to wear out many bodies, especially in the course of a long life. For if while the man is alive the body deliquesces and decays, and yet the soul always weaves her garment anew and repairs the waste, then of course, when the soul perishes, she must have on her last garment, and this only will survive her; but then again, when the soul is dead, the body will at last show its native weakness, and soon pass into decay. And therefore this is an argument on which I would rather not rely as proving that the soul exists after death. For suppose that we grant even more than you affirm as within the range of possibility, and besides acknowledging that the soul existed before birth, admit also that after death the souls of some are existing still, and will exist, and will be born and die again and again, and that there is a natural strength in the soul which will hold

out and be born many times—for all this, we may be still inclined to think that she will weary in the labours of successive births, and may at last succumb in one of her deaths, and utterly perish; and this death and dissolution of the body which brings destruction to the soul may be unknown to any of us, for no one of us can have had any experience of it: and if this be true, then I say that he who is confident in death has but a foolish confidence, unless he is able to prove that the soul is altogether immortal and imperishable. But if he is not able to prove this, he who is about to die will always have reason to fear that when the body is disunited, the soul also may utterly perish.[1]

The charming subtlety of this argument makes it an admirable instrument for use against the too eager people who wish to find scientific proofs of a future life. The moral (or non-moral) root of their desire is usually nothing but the unacknowledged and unexorcised fear of death. They have not risen to the standpoint of eternity. They want an assurance that the dreadful visitant is a good fairy in disguise. Convince them that even if the death of "this machine" is not a finality, yet their annihilation may be only postponed and will finally occur, and what comfort will the ghost-stories of the *séance*-room hold for them? Now, this refusal to rest satisfied with anything short of a positive assurance of immortality is due to a misunderstanding of our spiritual needs. It is not endless life that we crave: it is spiritual perfection, irrespective of duration; eternity, not immortality. As soon as the eyes of the soul are opened and it understands its own needs aright, it ceases to be concerned with the question of its duration, and is absorbed in the problem of its deserving.

[1] *Phaedo*, §§ 87–88.

This is one of the points in which the ethical insight of Plato pierces deeper than that of the New Testament. Jesus, indeed, says but little of a life after death. When he mentions it, he does so in order to lay down a doctrine of salvation by righteous deeds, which is in stark contradiction to the credal theory of the Church.[1] St. Paul, beginning with the notion of bodily resurrection, rises by degrees to the thought of ethical renewal. In this life he becomes a partaker of Christ's resurrection, by having "the same *mind* which was in Christ Jesus." But in general the Church has insisted upon that side of the Pauline doctrine which the Apostle has in common with the apocalyptic Judaism of his time. Even to-day, there is much more discussion in the Church over the supremely unimportant question whether the body of Jesus left the grave alive, than over the means of attaining to that quality of character which makes the question of resurrection and continuance insignificant. The teaching of the Church should be that men may believe as their own judgment dictates about the question of personal immortality, but that they ought to rise above the *desire* for it. If it is to be, our concern should be to be worthy of it; but if not, our concern is the same.

The last conversation of Socrates with his friends closes with the great myth of the Underworld, in which the ethical intuitions are reduced to pictorial form. At death, the genius of each soul carries it to its appropriate place in the heart of the earth, where it is judged according to its deeds. The indifferent characters are carried from the river Acheron to the Acherusian lake, there to

[1] Matt. xxv, 31 ff.

dwell in purgatorial penance until they deserve absolution from their sins. Afterwards they obtain the reward of their good deeds:

> But those who appear to be incurable by reason of the greatness of their crimes—who have committed many and terrible deeds of sacrilege, murders foul and violent, or the like—such are hurled into Tartarus, which is their suitable destiny; and *they never come out.*[1]

Lesser criminals are plunged for a year in the Tartarean flames, after which they too pass to the purgatorial lake, there to remain "until they obtain mercy *from those whom they have wronged:* for that is the sentence inflicted on them by their judges." Those who have lived holy lives, and have duly purified themselves with "philosophy," "live henceforth altogether without the body, in mansions fairer far than these, which may not be described."

The fact that the two highest systems of ethics thus far evolved—the Platonic and the Christian—have both taught a doctrine of eternal punishment, is exceedingly interesting. Neither teaches, indeed, the barbaric doctrine of Tertullian, Augustine, and the other perverters who degraded Christianity into mediaeval Catholicism. Neither attaches this tremendous penalty to error of belief or to the misfortune of not having heard some true doctrine or experienced some magical sacrament which could have averted it. Both insist that only unrighteous deeds, and nothing else, can incur the dire judgment. Yet, even so, the myth remains shocking to us, until we divine the truth which it is meant to express. This is the deep sense which the greatest seers—Plato and Jesus—

[1] *Phaedo*, § 113, *ad fin.*

had of the qualitative degradation of the soul through evil deeds. Those who go into Tartarus for ever are the *incurable*. They are not sent thither by the arbitrary fiat of any judge. Through their own acts they have become incapable of any other destiny. If the good that man can attain in this life is an eternal one, then we may surely say (in myth) that the necessary consequence of its deliberate forfeiture is also eternal. The wilful loss of any opportunity for spiritual self-realization *is* an "eternal punishment." The doctrine is in this sense true, even though there be no life after death.

Plato ends as he began—not with metaphysical speculations, but with the ethical application of the whole argument:—

> Wherefore I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who has cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him, and rather hurtful in their effects, and has followed after the pleasures of knowledge in this life; who has adorned the soul in her own proper jewels, which are temperance, and justice, and courage, and nobility, and truth. In these arrayed, she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her time comes.[1]

This is the thing that is more important than immortality. The yearning for that is commonly (though not necessarily, and not always) a disguised desire to escape death. But, in the words of the *Apology*, "the difficulty is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness." To him who cares only for that, the personal interest of the question of life after death is destroyed.

The strongest inducement offered in the *Phaedo* to

[1] Sections 114–15.

belief in immortality is not any of its arguments, but the character of Socrates himself. He is so transcendently great in the hour of his freely chosen doom that he creates (as Jowett has said) "in the mind of the reader an impression stronger than could be derived from arguments that such a one, in his own language, has in him 'a principle which does not admit of death.'" It is hard to resist the feeling that the final destruction of such a personality would represent a sort of suicide of the universe—through the destruction of its noblest possible manifestation. We fall back, accordingly, on the intuition that if Socrates is not immortal, he is something better than immortal: he is eternal. His spirit lived again in Plato and Aristotle, and in lesser degree in all whom they have inspired. In the measure in which it lives in us, we shall rise with him above the fear of death and the craving for endless life, into the fairer mansion that is eternally open to the soul which is adorned in its own proper jewels.

Yet to the end we must be content to wait and wonder whether the personal self-consciousness that was in him, and that which is in us, retains its selfhood and continues to live and act after this scene closes. The patient Sphinx disdains our questioning:

> We ask and ask: thou smilest, and art still,
> Out-topping knowledge.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION AND NATIONALITY

RELIGION is an inexpugnable fact of human life. At times it seems to sway with resistless power the consciousness of individuals and the destinies of States and empires; at other times, again, its hold on men and polities seems almost ended. The strife of new philosophies, the emergence of convictions based on changing knowledge as to the make of the world, the ambitions of kings and "fierce democracies," the shifting of human attention from the gods to the economic forces that condition daily life—all these things by turns drive religion from the foreground of the collective consciousness; and at first glance this repression seems identical with extinction. It is not so in truth, however. The forces of religion are but driven underground, whence they again emerge—for another time, if not within the life-span of the generation that has banished them—in new outbreaks of destroying and creating activity.

We live in such a period of the seeming extinction of religion to-day. Here, as in every European country, except perhaps Spain and Russia, other interests are usurping its old-time supremacy. The collective minds of nations are given up to secular concerns. In nation after nation Churches are being disestablished. New commonwealths are arising which omit the name of God from their constitutions, and which exclude themselves—as this country did from the first—from the right and

power to "make any law respecting an establishment of religion." Thus more and more religion is conceived of as the personal and private affair of individuals, who may in its interest organize themselves into voluntary societies, but who may not demand for it national recognition. It is not felt to have any fundamental or organic connection with the life and destiny of nations and States, and these as such are held to have no right to establish, endow or assume responsibility for any Church or Churches.

I do not believe that a State Church or Churches, in the sense in which such Churches are established in England and Germany, should be set up in this country. The purpose of the present chapter is not to plead for a State Church, but to draw attention to the relation of religion to nationality, in the belief that by a correct understanding of the actual facts of life religion will be humanized and nationality spiritualized. The Churches should become aware of their national function, and the nation of its religious function. Only so is the reconciliation of our spiritual enmities and the attainment of our ideal national destiny possible. Such, at least, is the thesis which I shall now attempt to establish.

It remains to be decided, by reference to the hard logic of experience, whether the exclusion of an inevitable and deep-seated interest of the spirit of man from the purview of the national consciousness is expedient, or even permanently possible. We cannot bar out religion from the sphere of the common life simply by declaring that it ought to be so excluded. If religion be in natural fact a force co-extensive with nationality, and vital to the normal and efficient functioning of commonwealths, then no antipathy of individuals to it, and no desire on the part of statesmen to humiliate or destroy Churches, can

prevent such an irrepressible force from sooner or later reasserting itself and compelling its recognition at the hands of governments. "Things," says the wise truism, "are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be." We have seen many times in history how kings and parties have been forced, against their will, to recognize principles which they hated, and to act in their legislation upon doctrines which with their lips they denied and denounced. Thus it has been that for more than fifty years both the great political parties in England have been legislating upon communistic principles, which, in their theoretical formulation, are repudiated and anathematized by the leaders of those parties. Herbert Spencer was unquestionably right in asserting, in *The Man versus the State*, that English Liberalism had undergone a complete change of principle in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Measures animated by the fundamental spirit of socialism are being passed every year by Liberal and Conservative Governments, whose members occupy their leisure hours in preaching and writing eloquent denunciations of socialism and all its works. Since the war began, the English Cabinet has done a hundred things which in times of peace, when Socialists demanded them, had been declared visionary and impossible. Thus, too, in this country it has come about that a President and party whose political tradition and personal convictions bind them to Rousseau's *Contrat Social* theory of society—to the upholding of the rights of individual States and the restriction of the functions of the Federal Government—are daily driven to action destructive of that theory, because implicitly affirming the illimitable authority of the central Government over all constituent parts of the nation.

The lesson of these and similar incontrovertible facts is plain for all to read. *No political theory, no constitution and no legislation which are not truly in harmony with the nature of things can endure.* The personal desires and antipathies of men and nations must sooner or later be subordinated to the intractable realities of existence, or else those men and nations will suffer shipwreck.

One of these realities is the natural and inevitable connection between religion and nationality. The historic fact of the continuous interaction and interdependence between nations and Churches was an inevitable outcome of the spiritual nature and social exigencies of man. It was not an arbitrary result of the ambitions or interests of kings and priests. The greatness of States has waxed and waned step by step with the waxing and waning of religion as an ethical and nation-moulding force. The strength of kingdoms and commonwealths has never lain primarily in their economic or military resources; but their control of these things was itself an outgrowth of that idealistic patriotism which is a vital expression of religion. The internal decay of the latter has always, and necessarily, preceded and caused the decline of the former; and never has any nation recovered from economic crisis or from military or political overthrow except as its people have been ideally bound together in devotion to its spiritual and temporal ends.

Religion, moreover, has demonstrated itself to be the only force which can ensure the resurrection and immortality of nationhood after a body politic has been crucified by alien powers. Thus was it with ancient Judaism, and thus is it in modern Ireland. The unification of Italy in the nineteenth century was effected only

when the sentiment voiced by Mazzini, that "Italy is itself a religion," became dominant in the breasts of her patriotic sons. In mediæval Germany, while there was no political or economic unity, religion proved itself to be a force that bound all Germans together; and that idealism which brought about the political unification of Germany in the eighteen-seventies was in its essence as much religious as political or militaristic. Even to-day, the Kaiser's fantastic claim to be the representative and vicegerent of God expresses and answers to a sentiment deeply rooted in the nation over which he rules. He is, to those whose vision is not distorted by occultistic theories, and who have learned to interpret facts expressed in theological language at their sociological value, visibly as much the *pontifex maximus* as the *imperator* of Germany.

In England, there have taken place within the last two centuries a gradual transference of the prerogatives of the monarchy to the Cabinet, and through it indirectly to the electorate; and a virtual extinction of the Established Church as a national force. It has not, however, been generally perceived that these changes have approximately corresponded with an assumption by the State of functions hitherto considered exclusively religious and ecclesiastical. The identity of purpose and result between many things now done by the State and things formerly done by the Church will be clear to all who are not hypnotized by names. For the rite of baptism (which meant sociologically the recognition and assumption of responsibility for each new individual life by the community) is now substituted registration by the State; and even those who most bitterly resented compulsory baptism find nothing objectionable in the coer-

cion exercised by the State in the matter of registration. The reason is that men are never conscious of constraint or resentful of compulsion in things which they see to be of prime social necessity. This in the case of registration is obvious to them; in the case of baptism, the very same necessity was concealed by the supernaturalistic implications of the sacrament.

In the same way, even among the bitterest opponents of compulsory ecclesiastical marriage, none save extreme anarchists are found to object to compulsory civil marriage; and this again for the reason that they perceive in the latter an absolute need, arising from the nature of things and the organic structure of human society. This it was, and not the alleged supernaturalistic institution of monogamy, which explained and justified the enforced matrimonial ceremony of the Church; and the decline of the Church in the loyalty and reverence of men did not and could not abrogate the natural necessity in response to which the Church had functioned.

Yet more striking is the assent, even of the most rigorously anti-religious and anti-ecclesiastical thinkers, to the establishment of universal and compulsory education by modern States. For fully fourteen centuries, the Church had been the only educator of Europe. In the main, its functioning in that capacity was lamentably inefficient; yet by the common consent of men and nations it was recognized as the natural and rightful depositary of this national responsibility. The Church's monopoly of education, and the fact that "instruction" was synonymous with "religious instruction," is testified to by the unerring evidence of language, which preserves to this day the tradition identifying a *clerk* with a *clericus*. Throughout English history, until recent

times, a man who could read and write was thereby entitled to certain legal privileges, known as "benefit of clergy." The decline of the traditional Church has synchronized precisely with the rise of the demand that the function of educator should be assumed by the State. It is interesting to observe, moreover, that the pressure of necessity is forcing the most anti-ecclesiastical of modern States to transform their educational codes from mere vehicles of the rudiments of "secular" knowledge into media for the imparting of moral truth and for the awakening and guidance of idealistic aspirations. This process is taking place before our eyes to-day in America and France, and has already gone far in England.

The contention, then, is that—*since things do not lose their identity when they undergo a change of name*—all modern States are in fact Churches, at least to the extent to which they assume and discharge the historic functions of Churches. The continuity of these modern national and civic undertakings with those of the mediæval Church could be demonstrated even down to details too minute to fall within the scope of the present volume. For example, no student can fail to perceive the sociological identity between the ecclesiastical conditions for ordination and the tests of knowledge and character imposed by modern States on all candidates for the teaching profession, and upon magistrates and other functionaries who are empowered to perform marriages, to register births and deaths, to hear confessions of sin (albeit in the law-court instead of the church), to impose penances, and to remit or retain the sins confessed by or proved against the delinquents with whom they deal.

If, then, it be the State which celebrates our sacraments and acts as our teacher, substituting a nurture

and admonition on behalf of its own ideals and enduring interests for the traditional "nurture and admonition of the Lord," it necessarily follows that the State to-day is in so far a Church.

It is true that States do not presume to interest themselves in the life of individual citizens after death, or in the precise details of their theological beliefs. Yet they do take enormous pains to produce such conduct, and even such beliefs, in their citizens as shall secure the immortality of the nations whose brain and soul they are. The sociological student can clearly see that the ancient insistence of Christendom on theological orthodoxy and uniformity of creed was actually, if unconsciously, motived by the same social necessity which to-day leads the United States to prohibit anarchists and polygamists from entering her borders, which in recent years led France to imprison Gustave Hervé for preaching a "strike against war" among the conscripts of her army, and which forced England, not long ago, to compel the resignation of a Minister of War who had shown signs of tolerating in the military caste opinions and conduct destructive of the army's usefulness as an organ of the Government.

Thus the actual reason why freedom of theological opinion is tolerated in modern nations is because uniformity in such opinion is no longer held to be essential to national safety and stability. Of any beliefs which, if diffused and acted on by large masses of men, would result in the overthrow of government and the destruction or even the serious imperilling of the nation, modern States are by natural necessity as intolerant as were mediæval ones of theological heterodoxy. Australia, for example, has of late years coerced Quakers to violate

their consciences by enlisting in her conscript army. Her procedure may indeed be unjustifiable; but it was unmistakably prompted by the same motive which caused the Roman Empire to insist on Christians paying reverence to the statues of its deified emperors, which induced the Catholic Church to persecute all deviators from its accepted formulæ, and which led the English Government, after the Restoration of 1660, to make the taking of Holy Communion according to the Anglican rite a test for admission to civil and political offices.

The argument thus far set forth needs justifying and developing by two further considerations. The first is, that not merely is the modern State in truth a Church, but that all nations, as such, have always been Churches. The second is, that the modern nation is dangerously inefficient on the spiritual side by reason of its unawareness of its true nature. No society can discharge any task with the attainable maximum of efficiency if it be unconscious of the real nature and end of the activities in which it is engaged.

That nations have always been Churches is a proposition which will be rejected as self-evidently absurd only by those who hold that religion is exclusively engaged with the supernatural. Whoever admits that the function of religion has been, at least in part, to inculcate standards of conduct necessary for the elevation of human society in this life, must admit that it has been to this extent an important auxiliary to secular governments. Nor can it be denied, in view of many well-known facts of sociology and history, that the special standards of conduct which religion dictated and sanctioned were always those desired by the relatively far-sighted few in

whom the tribal or national consciousness resided, and to whom was committed the working out of the common destiny. The almost universal combination in early societies of regal and sacerdotal duties in the same person is an illustration of this fact. Where we find the offices differentiated, there is nevertheless complete interdependence between the royal and priestly functionaries. If the king is not the head of the Church, then the Church is, so to speak, the head of the king. The priest is the king-maker, if the king is not the priest-maker; and either state of the facts sufficiently testifies to the sociological identity between religion and nationality.

The history of the ancient Jews, in which these facts are incontestable, was by no means so exceptional as it is commonly supposed to have been. In many other communities it was equally an essential part of good citizenship for a man to worship the gods believed in by the State. So much was this the case in ancient Greece that Socrates, as we have seen, was condemned and executed for alleged disbelief in the accepted deities of his city.

Now, what these typical and familiar facts signify is that tribal gods and national religions have never been anything but the objectification and crystallization of whatsoever ideals and standards of conduct were held to be necessary to national well-being, stability and permanence. To worship no gods at all meant, or was taken to mean, indifference to or contempt for the national code of morality. To worship alien gods was equivalent to treason. An ancient Jew who indulged in the sensuous polytheism of neighbouring tribes was acting in a way which, if universalized, would have involved the annihilation of the Jewish national consciousness, through the absorption of the Hebrew people in other nations. Hence

the first Commandment,[1] and the denunciations of idolatry by prophets and lawgivers. And in like manner, contempt for the gods of Athens was punished because to the Athenians it meant contempt for the laws of Athens.

A nation, in truth, is never a mere accidental aggregation of persons born in a given geographical area; nor is it merely a unit of economic, political or military life. That which is above and beyond all these things, and indeed determines their evolution, is what New Yorkers humorously declare Boston to be: "a state of mind." That is, a nation is a social unit animated by conscious or unconscious common interests and by an intelligent or instinctive devotion to common ideal ends. It is more than the arithmetical sum of its inhabitants at any moment, for it is the historic spirit which has begotten each of its members, and which causes those mental and spiritual peculiarities in them which differentiate them from all other peoples. It is that Universal—in the Aristotelian if not in the Platonic sense—which they individually embody and illustrate.

England, for example, is the creator of all Englishmen. She is the source of the deepest selfhood of each of them—of their language and modes of thought, and even of the wholly unconscious presuppositions which regulate all their thinking and all their deeds. That Englishmen in general, like the citizens of most other nations, are un-

[1] It must not be forgotten that the Pentateuchal decalogues are not "monotheistic" in any metaphysical or philosophic sense. The phrase mistranslated in the English versions (Deut. vi, 4) to read "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord," really means, "Hear, O Israel, Yahwe is our God, Yahwe alone." It is thus consistent with the first Commandment, which admits the existence of other gods by prohibiting their worship.

aware of this fact, proves nothing against it. As Seeley—the one great modern English philosopher of religious nationalism—has pointed out, we are commonly unconscious of the pressure of the atmosphere which we breathe; yet that atmosphere is the most omnipresent and ineludible fact of our experience. And if the truth of one's vital and organic dependence upon one's nation is hidden from the stay-at-home native, it nevertheless becomes speedily apparent to any thoughtful man who travels abroad. The first impression one gets on landing in America, for instance, is that it is not these swarming millions of people, with their obvious differences from all other speakers of the English tongue, who make America, but that it is America which has made them. The nation is the *élan vital*, the brooding Oversoul, which engenders the individual soul of each citizen.

To be sure, the universal humanity in all men is one and the same, just as, no doubt, the pigments used by the painters of Renaissance Italy were identical with those used by the artists of the Flemish school. But this uniform viscous medium is manipulated and distributed by the soul of each nation into forms that differ from each other as much as the pictures of the Flemish school differ from those of the Italian. Or, to take another illustration, it is undeniable that the sounds and letters which make up the French language are the same as those into which English is analyzable, and both tongues are regulated by identical principles of grammatical logic. Yet the striking fact about these two languages is not their similarity, but their unlikeness. So is it with a man begotten and born of the pervading historical soul called England, as compared with one engendered by that other overarching spiritual unity

whose name is China. The two men are compact of the same physical organs, which in both cases prefigure the same functions and demand the same psychic satisfactions. The synthesis of primal instincts is the same in each, and both possess the same framework of rational and extra-rational mentality. Yet the two are stamped and sundered by the entire difference of history, circumstance and ideal aspiration between England and China for two thousand years. A human being, at any given moment, is psychologically definable as a system of impulses in unstable equilibrium; but the special character and direction of these impulses is in every case due to the fact of his affiliation with one particular reservoir of living national tradition, rather than another.

The most significant and precious gift, then, of any nation to its children consists of the super-temporal group-consciousness embodied in its laws, its ideals, its art and literature, and its proverbial wisdom. Yet not even in these characteristic expressions does a nation truly live. The essence of any commonwealth is that spirit in it which creates these things, which proclaims itself not only in positive laws and institutions but also in the impulse of innovators and reformers. When a people lives by a borrowed religious creed, that creed is inevitably modified in its social application by the total psychic atmosphere with which it becomes blended. Thus in pre-Reformation Europe, despite the cosmopolitanism of the Church, Catholicism uttered itself in the different countries in definitely individualized mintings. Gallicanism, like Anglicanism, was a special incarnation of the common spiritual energy of the Continent. And to-day an orthodox Jew from Russia is different from

an English orthodox Jew not merely in physical type, but in his whole scale of moral and spiritual values, and in his conception of the possibilities and impossibilities of personal and social achievement. All Englishmen—Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Jews and free thinkers—are immensely more alike than different, and are characterized far more by the fact of their nationality than by their theological belief. There is actually more in common between an English Catholic and an English Agnostic than between an English and an Italian Catholic. If you meet an American in any city of Europe, you shall recognize him at once as an American, but never (unless he tells you) as an Episcopalian, a Methodist or a Mormon. So much more are men qualified and characterized by their nationality than by their theological creed. The influence of nationality is so pervasive and ineludible that in any crisis it grinds to powder all the barriers of class and philosophy by which men separate themselves from their fellows.

Thus history and experience abundantly prove the truth of the contention that nationality is a spiritual and psychic rather than a physical fact. A nation is ordinarily characterized by its occupation of a given geographical area, as well as by unity and continuity of consciousness through time. The former is necessary to its efficient functioning; but the latter alone is essential to its continued existence. There are many cases on record of the break-up and disappearance of nations through the dissipation of conscious spiritual unity. The extinction of ancient commonwealths, such as Assyria, Persia, Egypt, and Greece, does not mean that the people constituting them were ever annihilated. It means only that the unified consciousness which had expressed

itself in their laws, religion, art, and customs was destroyed. The physical representatives of all of them are still with us, and for the most part are still occupying their ancient territory. But that common consciousness, that general will, which in Egypt built the Pyramids and wrote the Book of the Dead, is gone. The Greeks of to-day, despite some blending, are the authentic physical descendants of the contemporaries of Pericles and Socrates; yet they can scarcely be called the same nation. Centuries of alien dominance brought about the disintegration of that consciousness which had expressed itself in the Parthenon, in the Acropolis, and in the philosophy and drama which were the fountain heads of European thought and literature. Under favourable circumstances, no doubt, "the world's great age begins anew, the golden years return"; and the development which the Battle of Navarino inaugurated in 1827 expresses at least the possibility of a resurrection of that ancient unity of ideal and purpose. But the very need of a resurrection testifies to the death which preceded.

On the other hand, we have in the case of the Jews an instance of the preservation of nationality without territorial unity or political autonomy. Unique as this instance is, there is nothing mysterious in it—nothing, that is, that cannot be traced to adequate social causes. The weakness and constant peril of the Jewish political State, surrounded as it was by powerful and ambitious neighbours, had from the first produced an uncommon intensification of the sense of spiritual unity and ideal loyalty among the Hebrew people. When their crisis came, and they were politically overthrown and dispersed about the world, their statesmanship deliberately set itself the task of devising instruments for the preser-

vation of their conscious unity,—instruments which should be independent both of territorial and of political sovereignty. How this scheme was carried out can be seen in part in the book of Ezekiel, the later Old Testament writings, and some of the Apocrypha. Jerusalem remained, indeed, as it still does, the centre of Jewish hope, aspiration, and devotion; but the necessity for personal attendance there was obviated. Seeley has well remarked that it was "by the waters of Babylon" that Jewish nationality was transformed into Judaism. The hateful persecutions which from of old have afflicted the Jews in so many alien lands, were motived by the obstinate resistance of this people to assimilation. Their resistance was rendered possible by the highly articulated system of symbolism and family religious observance, which ensured the continuity of their group-consciousness, and made the old commands against exogamy and against the worship of alien gods into effectual motives in the breasts of the scattered Jewish families. So long as their intense awareness of their separation from all other peoples, their feeling of identity with their fellow Jews throughout the world, and their hope of restoration to their old territory and to national sovereignty remained intact, it was impossible for them to become absorbed into the nations among which they lived. Now this sense of separateness was kept alive by two factors only: first, their religious system; and secondly, the very persecution which, in resentment of their divided loyalty, sought to end it. In so far as in modern countries, like England and America, persons of Jewish descent are forgetting or repudiating their origin and the loyalties prompted by it, this is visibly due to change of creed, and to their admission in such

countries to full equality with their non-Jewish fellow-citizens.

To sum up, then: Nationality may be destroyed without the loss of territorial unity. Or it can survive despite this loss. When it does, its survival is due to the persistence of national ideals and the resulting consciousness of unity of inheritance and goal.

The importance of a true doctrine of nationality and of its connection with religion is demonstrated by the experienced dangers incident to a misunderstanding of these tremendous forces. To contend, as I have done, that religion and nationality are in large measure identical is not in the least to imply that either religion or nationality is in every case a good and admirable thing. This I would request the reader to bear clearly in mind, since the unfamiliar argument I am presenting will encounter his prejudice if he forgets it, or forgets that I am aware of it. Either religion or nationality, or both, may be good, bad, or indifferent; savage or civilized; rational or mythological. National patriotism may be consistent with and conducive to true humanitarianism and the establishment of universal peace and fraternity. It may, on the other hand, be a menace to these ideals. If it is exclusive, and connotes hatred of other nations, or if it aims at the domination of the world, politically or spiritually, by a single people, it becomes the most mischievous of all forms of insanity. Religion, too, is not a special kind of consciousness, but a special mode or direction of the same consciousness which functions in other spheres of human interest. If it fosters an exclusive nationalism, or if it is so absorbed in extra-mundane hopes as to induce neglect of the spiritual opportunities of the present life, it also becomes a menace to the interests of humanity.

The necessity of a right understanding of these great psychic forces has been vividly brought home to us by the unprecedented disaster of the European War. Modern sentiment had for years been growing oblivious to the indestructible force of national loyalty, and had mistakenly supposed that the development of the means of world-wide intercommunication had inaugurated an era of cosmopolitanism. This was a dangerous blunder. The machinery which made possible the fulfilment of national ambitions was supposed to have rendered impossible the perpetuation of the spirit which created it. The interpretation, also, of human life in terms of motives controlled exclusively by economic interest had produced the gigantic illusion that national patriotism was weakened and on the way to becoming extinct.

Now there are many to-day who in their humanitarianism loathe the idea of patriotism or nationalism, just as there are many who in their detestation of supernaturalism turn their backs upon every actual and possible form of religion. To such thinkers I would merely urge for the moment that *it is of no use to ignore a fact simply because one does not like it.* The most stupendous fact of history, and especially of the history that is to-day in the making, is the indestructible and gigantic force of national solidarity and loyalty, even in those who had mistakenly imagined themselves to have outgrown it.

What, for example, is the explanation of the alleged collapse of Socialism at the outbreak of the present war? It was not a collapse of Socialism at all. On the contrary, in each of the contending nations there has been an immense advance in the practical application of socialistic principles,—though, to be sure, in undemocratic fashion, under stress of necessity rather than from convic-

tion of their ethical soundness. What broke down when this war began was the mythological metaphysic which many Socialists, especially those of the school of Marx, had foolishly supposed to be an integral part of their system. For forty years they had been insisting, in the teeth of the facts, that there was no such thing as unity of interest between all the classes that compose a nation. They had declared that the working-man in Germany has more in common with the working-man in Russia or France than with the aristocracy or plutocracy of his own country. They had asserted that economic interest is the *sole* determinant of the human will, and consequently that solidarity must follow the pressure of this motive throughout the world, irrespective of physical and psychic frontiers. Accordingly, they had supposed that the outbreak of an international war would herald the combination of the workers of different countries in solid opposition to the schemes of the capitalistic groups by whom (as they maintained) the affairs of the nations are controlled.

Now what happened when the war began was that these theorists experienced *in themselves* the irresistible working of the very forces of which they had denied the existence. They became aware for the first time that the German or French or English working-man actually has many more interests in common with *all* the classes of his own nation than with his own class in other nations. Gustave Hervé was one of the first to volunteer in France, and the German Socialists have been among the bravest fighters in their country's cause. To those who had for years been preaching this truth, the instantaneous unification of the nations in the face of the peril of invasion was neither shocking nor surprising. To those,

on the other hand, who with short-sighted optimism had declared that it could not happen, it must needs have been a heart-breaking disappointment.

Now there is no country in which the importance of a correct understanding of these great sociological forces is so vital and urgent as in America. We are here attempting, under wholly unprecedented conditions, to build up a unified nation out of the most diverse and heterogeneous elements. Unless we rightly understand the factors in our own nature which we must control to this end, the great experiment is foredoomed to failure. If it fails, then the hope of a peaceful and fraternal organization of mankind will perish with it, or at least will be deferred for an incalculable period. The Churches have here their greatest opportunity and their greatest responsibility. They must set themselves firmly against the spread-eagle jingoism which would make American patriotism identical with hatred of other nations, and also against the false theory of anti-patriotic cosmopolitanism which has gained so much ground in recent years. It is the function of the Churches not only to be the standard-bearers of the ideal, but also to clarify the minds of men, in regard to the intellectual principles which should govern the formation and revision of ideals.

The anti-patriotic theory of the class-war Socialist needs no refutation. It lies dead upon the battlefields of Europe. Every Marxian Socialist in the contending armies is an irrefutable witness to the fact that life is stronger than the single-track logic of the "materialist conception of history." The actual spiritual unity of nations, which in economic and other minor interests may be divided against themselves, is demonstrated with tragic convincingness. The dream of a unification of

mankind along class lines and in disregard of the spiritual frontiers of nations is dissipated. For good or for ill, we now know that that deep identity which is expressed in unity of language, and in the consciousness of a common past and a common lot, is greater and more radical than any difference of immediate political policy or economic interest. No party will ever again seek to build upon the quicksands of the Marxian mythology.

But this demonstration of the reality and the invincible strength of the psychic force of nationalism must not lead us to abandon or to despair of what was sound in the cosmopolitan ideal. That ideal was not so much an illusion as a misstatement of a vitally important truth, which has too commonly been overlooked by the advocates of nationalism. That we may see how important this truth is, we have but to look at the horrible prospect held out by those who consciously reject it. General von Bernhardi is the man who has recently gained the widest hearing for the doctrine of exclusive nationalism. He maintains that it is of the nature of treason for any citizen [1] to entertain an ideal loyalty transcending that which he owes to his own country. Everybody has recoiled in horror from the brutal national egoism thus advocated. Yet here in America we have no less representative a citizen than Colonel Roosevelt proclaiming a doctrine which (whether he knows it or not) is in fact identical with that of Bernhardi. This is the doctrine of "My country right or wrong"—a principle which leads to a complete abdication of the moral judgment of citizens in regard to any act or policy of their country involving its relations to the rest of the

[1] At least of Germany: it is not clear that the doctrine applies to Americans, especially those of German or Irish origin!

world. Colonel Roosevelt and many others have snatched up this ill-considered and fatal catchword with a view to the unification of the American people. We are a medley of new-comers from all the lands of Europe, and the survival among us of extra-American loyalties involves the possibility of serious danger to the unity of our chosen country. Many of us are looking back to the civilization and the artistic tradition of Europe, instead of forward to that which is to be in America. Mr. Roosevelt is entirely right in saying that we should cease to ape Europe. He is no less completely wrong in maintaining that our American loyalty requires the abdication of our freedom of thought and of moral judgment in regard to America's foreign policy.

It is curious that the most vociferous advocates of the doctrine of "My country right or wrong" are at the same moment loudest in voicing condemnations of Germany. How can they fail to detect the inconsistency of their attitude? If the doctrine which they proclaim is valid for America, it must be no less valid for any other nation. Yet the criticism most often passed upon Germany is that her people have slavishly acted upon this principle. They have acquiesced in every militaristic development demanded by their Government. They assented to the invasion of Belgium, precisely upon the ground that the acts of their Government are the acts of their country, and that they are bound to stand by their country in whatever course her rulers decide to take. Colonel Roosevelt's attitude in affirming this doctrine and simultaneously pouring out the vials of his wrath against Germany is a distressing evidence of his fundamental incapacity for clear ethical judgment. He is urging his compatriots to adopt an attitude which

cannot fail to lead to the very results at which he is so horrified in the Old World.

This narrow, chauvinistic and exclusive nationalism is as great a menace to the peace and progress of the world as the anti-nationalism of the cosmopolitan school. The only way to encounter both perils is to affirm the true doctrine of nationalism. The starting-point in all plans for the peaceful federation of the world must be the principle laid down many years ago by Mazzini:

> Nations are the citizens of humanity, as individuals are the citizens of the nation. And as every individual lives a two-fold life, inward and of relation, so do the nations. As every individual should strive to promote the power and prosperity of his nation through the exercise of his special function, so should every nation, in performing its special mission, according to its special capacity, perform its part in the general work, and promote the progressive advance and prosperity of humanity. Nationality and humanity are therefore equally sacred. To forget humanity is to suppress the aim of our labours; to cancel the nation is to suppress the instrument by which to achieve the aim.[1]

The great Italian has here formulated the true principle of patriotism. He sees that there can be no such thing as a melting down of all mankind into one undifferentiated mass of humanity-in-general. He sees that the nation is a permanent and indispensable organ for the achievement of the ends of the race. He also sees that, because this is true, patriotism must be expressed in the form of a universal ethical principle. When this is done, we transcend the immoral and braggart doctrine

[1] Mazzini, "The Holy Alliance of the Peoples" (1849), in *Collected Works*, vol. v, p. 274.

of "My country right or wrong," by defining the only conditions under which our country can be right, and consequently can demand from us a rational and undivided allegiance. By the very law that binds me to my own country, I am equally bound to respect the devotion of all other men to theirs. Because I hold my own nation inviolable, I must equally protest against any policy which would lead to the violation of another nation.

The principle here involved is the same as that to which we were led in our study of the idea of God. Spiritual perfection—of which for us the highest manifestation is the perfection of humanity—is the integrated harmony of the minds and wills of all actual and possible rational agents. Into this conception there enter (as we said in Chapter III) "both the completeness of the series and the uniqueness of each of its terms." The reasoning which justifies this conclusion applies to families and nations as well as to the totality. The sacredness of every nation consists in the fact that it can contribute to the "general deed of man" some indispensable factor which no other nation can bring. Each has thus a unique mission; each is a chosen people. It is no sentimentality, but a literal truth of the highest moment, that "in the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal claim." Such is the dynamism of our lives that every act produces consequences far beyond the possibility of conscious following. Every act of a nation ramifies through space and reverberates through time, to the utmost verge of the world and to the remotest generation of posterity. The Greeks at Marathon decided the fate of Europe for all time—little as they knew it. When Spain equipped the expedition of Columbus, she changed the whole future history of the world.

Love of country, then, and the duty of loyalty to one's fatherland or the land of one's choice, is a specific application of a principle which, being ethical, is necessarily *universal*. That principle demands a respect for the patriotism of other peoples as complete as the self-respect that goes with one's own patriotism. What is right for me is right for my neighbour. What it would be wrong for him to do towards me, it must be wrong for me to do towards him. The ethics of international policy consists in the application to foreign affairs of the same moral principles that are recognized as binding within the limits of the nation. Until the whole world reaches a point where such an act as that of Germany towards Belgium would be impossible, it will not have attained even the beginnings of a truly ethical civilization. Mazzini's doctrine is the foundation-stone of the edifice of humanity.

Implied in these contentions is the truth that the Moral Law is one and indivisible, and is paramount over all expediencies that conflict with it. Patriotism is the reverence that should be felt for one's nation as a special custodian of this law, and as an agent for the actualization of its requirements in face of a unique set of opportunities and exigencies. The patriot is he whose ultimate loyalty is given unconditionally to this law, and only under it to his nation. The jingo doctrine is not patriotism, but a debased counterfeit which is really the opposite of what it simulates.

This placing of the nation under humanity, and of both under a law that is objective, eternal and immutable in principle, clears up for us the confusion raised by the parrot-cry of "My country right or wrong." It is your country's mission which gives her the right to your

loyalty; and only in so far as she is seeking to fulfil it can she have a right to your approval and co-operation. In case she errs or sins, it is true patriotism to admonish her of the error or to convict her of the sin.[1] But if you take the stand of the jingoes, you resign your prerogative as a moral agent. You give your conscience into the keeping of the Foreign Office, just as Catholics have sometimes given theirs into the keeping of the priest. Incidentally, too, you debar yourself from the right to blame any foreigner for the sins of *his* country; for if you blame him, he has but to retort that he acts by the same principle that you profess, and you are left without resource. In condemning the deeds of a foreign power, you appeal to a law superior to and binding upon all nations; and you tacitly pledge yourself to measure any future act of your own country by the standard that you invoke.

These considerations belong to the alphabet of ethics. The fact that they are not self-evident and universally accepted is a terrible commentary upon the failure of the Churches to fulfil their trust. My plea is that they should now rise to the full requirements of this hitherto neglected duty, by teaching that patriotism is the highest application of the universal moral law, and is identical with religion. A nation's mission to humanity—its opportunity of rendering a unique but indispensable service to the race—constitutes the authentic revelation of God to its citizens. When they insist that its every policy and deed shall be directed towards the fulfilment

[1] "Patriotism is not the belief that your country is right: patriotism is the passion to keep your country in the right. A country 'in the right' is thinking and acting not more for its own good than for that of all humanity."—Booth Tarkington, article "The American View," in *Metropolitan*, July, 1915.

of this its ideal destiny, they are truly patriotic, however violently the mob may accuse them of disloyalty or treason.

The alarm aroused in the breasts of many Americans by the reaction of the European War upon our domestic problems serves to draw attention both to the special task which America has in her keeping and to her comparative failure thus far to cope effectively with it. Encouraged by the heartfelt gratitude expressed by immigrants of exceptional genius, we have come to look upon America as being in truth the promised land to the oppressed of the whole earth. It is one of the superficial bad habits of all peoples to confound the ideals of their nation with its actual achievements. We mistake the so-called "glittering generalities" upon which the Republic is founded for a statement of things already won, whereas they are in truth only the outlines of remote ideals. Because America aspires to be the promised land, we are apt to imagine that she already is it. Huxley once remarked that "the slaying of a beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact" is the daily tragedy of science. There are many ugly facts on every hand to slay the optimistic illusion of Americans as to what their country has accomplished towards actualizing the ideals which gave it birth.

Among them is the truth which during the last two years has been realized more clearly than ever before,—that America has not so treated her immigrant population as to win to herself its complete and undivided loyalty. No doubt it is possible to exaggerate the extent of the evil of our disunion; but there is a very substantial residuum of truth, after every allowance has been made for exaggeration. It is not inconceivable that in the

event of war between America and almost any nation in Europe, the enemy power might have in this country a large population openly or secretly loyal to it and hostile to the Republic. Even in the case of those who have sincerely taken their pledge of allegiance to the United States, their loyalty is apt to be of the nature of an intellectual conviction, and, as such, inevitably weaker in its influence upon the will than the spontaneous and passionate sentiment of an inborn patriotism.

Now, the first task for America (and it is indeed a gigantic one) is to deserve on her own behalf such an unconditional and unquestioning allegiance as every other great nation is able to count upon from its citizens in any time of stress. This will necessitate, in the first place, the thinking out and the adoption of a policy in regard to immigration immeasurably more radical and far-reaching than any that has yet been contemplated. It *may* necessitate the practical closing of our doors to immigrants for at least a generation. I do not say that this will be necessary. My point is that if the competent study of the problem by disinterested experts should show it to be so, we must be prepared to act upon their finding. It certainly will be necessary to make far more rigid than hitherto the conditions of naturalization. We shall have to inaugurate a system of compulsory education for adult immigrants. The path in this direction is already being blazed in Chicago, where a body of unofficial citizens have begun to organize in the public schools classes for the instruction of applicants for citizenship. The effort is meeting with gratifying acceptance, both by the educational authorities and by the immigrants, who in large numbers are availing themselves of the privilege thus accorded. But it is merely a

pioneer experiment, pointing in the direction of a far more thorough handling of the problem on a national scale.

The tragic irony of the situation, however, lies in the fact that the education we must give to the immigrant will consist in the inculcation of ideals of Americanism which at present are flagrantly belied by many experiences of his daily life. We must teach him, as we now teach his children and our own, that America stands for human equality; and on every hand he will see the growing power of class distinctions, quite as abrupt as those of the European nations, and often more brutal. We shall teach him that America stands for equality of opportunity and for the granting of free scope to personal merit. He will go from the school, and see all around him evidences of the power of an anonymous plutocracy, which, by a hundred devices, has gained the whip hand over State and municipal governments, and organized its commercial monopolies so effectively that no inventor of an improved process who might threaten them with competition can procure capital for the flotation of his enterprise.[1] He knows by hard experience that in this country there is no less brutality in the treatment of labourers by their bosses and gangsters than in the Old World. He has encountered many new restrictions upon his liberty, such as he never met with in Europe. In the inhumanly sordid slums of our cities, he finds the "pursuit of happiness" tenfold more a mockery and a wild-goose chase than he had ever dreamed it could be. These are some of the reasons why, instead of forgetting

[1] The reader will scarcely need to be reminded of the vivid picture of this state of things drawn by President Wilson in his book on *The New Freedom*. I would commend also the excellent treatise on *Unpopular Government in the United States*, by Prof. Albert M. Kales, of North-Western University. (Chicago Univ. Press: 1914.)

his past, he frequently institutes unfavourable comparisons between it and his present conditions. Until America actually redeems the tremendous promises made to its recruits from Europe, it will be vain to harangue them about the duty of according to their adopted country a single and whole-souled allegiance.

Nor must we refuse to open our eyes to the appalling anomaly still presented by the political, economic and social status of the negro race among us. Europe is still smiling sardonically at the memory of that assemblage of freedom-loving slave-owners who drew up the declaration that all men are born equal and have an indefeasible right to life and liberty. Since the days of the fathers, however, the Republic, at the cost of a convulsion which threatened its life, has succeeded in purging itself of the cancer of chattel slavery. She did this very shortly after the backward and benighted despotism of Russia had abolished her immemorial system of serfdom. To-day the emancipated serfs of Russia are for the most part landowners, cultivating each his own little holding and living by its produce. America pledged her manumitted negroes the rights of free citizens,—a pledge which in the South has never been redeemed, and in the North has only been formally kept. Everybody knows by what evasions of the plighted faith of the Republic the negroes have been defrauded of political rights and denied equality of educational opportunity and of professional and economic status with their white fellow-citizens. The negro problem of to-day in this country, like the Jewish problem in Russia, is one that has been created by the nation's refusal to them of the rights of citizens and of the homage due to their moral dignity as human beings. The difference, however, between this

country and Russia is that Russia's tyranny has been unblushing and unconcealed, whereas our own has been rendered more odious by the hypocrisy of the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, solemnly guaranteeing to the victims of past tyranny a benefit which in practice has been withheld from them. If the ideal unity which all American patriots desire is to be actualized, we must begin by purging our national system of these ugly and poisonous defects.

It may be said that the problem is insoluble; that the negro is inferior, and so must be debarred from the free self-realization accorded to the white man. This is unproved and unprovable; but my contention is that, if the white race of America really believes this, it ought frankly and honestly to act upon the belief. Let us add some footnotes to the Constitution. Let us rescind the Fifteenth Amendment and Section I of the Fourteenth. Let us, for heaven's sake, not perpetuate the falsehood that we *are* according to these people a freedom and equality which we have no intention of permitting them to enjoy. Let us not persist in first denying them educational opportunity, and then pointing to their ignorance as a disqualification for the status of citizens. Let us not deliberately close the avenues of professional training and advancement to them, and then allege their economic backwardness as a proof of their inherent inferiority. Since we are in practice repudiating the ideals embodied in our organic laws, let us honestly say that we cannot live up to these ideals. Let us make clear what our real belief is: that all men are born equal, except those who are not; and that all have a right to the pursuit of happiness, so long as their pursuit of it does not cross the convenience of the dominant race or class.

If it be asked what connection all this has with the problem of religion, I would reply, in the first place, that it was a system of law and custom, by which all the exigencies of social life and class struggle were regulated, that constituted the substance of the religion of the Old Testament. Are the Constitutions of this nation and its States less sacred to us than the laws of Moses? Those laws emanated from the soul of the Jewish people, which they very appropriately called their God. The divinity of the system consisted in the fact that it embodied the highest ideals they were capable of conceiving. In this sense, and for these reasons, the legislation of the Old Testament really did constitute a divine revelation. We ought to regard our own organic laws as possessing for us the same kind of sanctity as the Mosaic legislation had for the Jews. They are our divine revelation. If they are defective, we have among us the revealing God—the reason and conscience by which to amend them. If our practice falls below the level of their demands, we are to that extent apostate from the faith we have professed, and disloyal to the organizing genius of our nation, which is for us the incarnation of God.

The Churches should systematically inculcate in the minds of the people this exalted and exalting view of the nation and its ideals. In our religion, American history should take a place equal to that which Jewish history held in the Hebrew religion, though without imitating the Jewish exclusiveness. In addition to the hymns of the ancient Jews, which confess their sins and celebrate their deliverances, we should chant the psalms of our own poets and prophets, in confession of the sins of America, and in thanksgiving for her historic deliverances and development. We are rendered blind to the sig-

nificance of our own position and problems, and to the dignity and responsibility of our own function as a contributor to the total achievement of humanity, by the fact that we are living on a borrowed religion, which consists mainly of expressions of another people's patriotism. What have our Churches to do with the victories of the Jews over their neighbours, and with the exaltation of Jerusalem and its temple? Were not the American Revolution and the Civil War at least as important—to put it mildly—for us and for the human race at large, as the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt and from Babylon? Has there not been in our common life as intimate an experience of the ultimate spiritual reality of the world as ever came to Isaiah, and have we not had poets and prophets equal in power of vision and speech to those of the old Hebrews? Why then should not the Churches give to American history, literature and poetry at least an equal place with that which they now suffer to be monopolized by those of the Jews?

Never shall we see our own opportunities and responsibilities in the light of their true dignity until we act confidently upon the conviction that our experience of the divine is identical with that of the ancients. The secret of the strength of the Jewish religious system lay in the fact that its essential elements were unborrowed. This gave it such strength and vigour that the whole Western world has ever since been paralyzed by the thought that the Bible alone contained a divine revelation. We profess to have advanced in the direction of democratic and humanistic conceptions, but we are still afraid to give effect to our convictions. We dare not act upon the principle that Washington and Lincoln stand in exactly the same category as Moses and David.

The result is that our own history and literature seem to us secular and commonplace as compared with those of this petty ancient people,—who, however, earned the right to their immortality by reason of their unwavering faith in their spiritual mission to mankind. Until we are willing to accord to our nation and its mission the same exalted position of identity with God and religion which the Jews gave to theirs, we cannot rise to the demands of our high calling, or achieve any fraction of the spiritual grandeur which is possible for us.

The problem of America's national unification, and of the hindrances that delay it, is momentous not only for America but equally for the rest of the world. The special mission which constitutes what may well be called the divine task of this country is to supply, by the solution of its own problems, an example of the way in which the unification of the rest of the world may be effected. If we can demonstrate that all the races of the earth can dwell together as one people, in perfect amity and freedom and in a unity of civilization enriched by the contribution of each constituent element, we shall have shown how the feuds and the estranging hatreds of the European peoples can be purged away. Our national ideals are sound and right; it is our practical violation of them that is wrong. The only ultimate basis for the peaceful federation of the world is that of republican equality. Democracy is the only extant form of government which can give scope to the finest spiritual possibilities of every human being. If, on this Continent, we can have forty-eight States in one nation, each preserving its internal autonomy, but without so much as the possibility of war, why should not the same state of things be duplicated in Europe? They talk there of

"insoluble problems," of clashes of racial and economic interest that can only be settled through bloodshed. The answer is that we, with huge numbers of all the European races in our population, have created a machinery by which every possible conflict of aspiration and interest can be harmonized, and by which the disastrous possibility of war is eliminated. There is in the nature of things no more reason for war between France and Germany than for war between Ohio and Indiana. The same federal principle which has made war impossible as between Ohio and Indiana, while securing to them all and more than all the liberty enjoyed by France and Germany, might bring about permanent and indestructible peace in Europe. It is, indeed, the principle upon which Europe will ultimately be driven to organize its life. This, then, is the high mission of the American Commonwealth,—to demonstrate that what Europeans think impossible can be done, and thereby to "give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace."

There are two views held by thinkers as to the development of American civilization, which are mutually exclusive, and both of which seem to me false. One is the theory summed up in Mr. Zangwill's happy phrase, "the melting-pot." The other is the doctrine that each national group represented in the population of the United States should be culturally segregated, in order that it may preserve the standards and traditions of the civilization in which it originated. These two views are derived, the one from the theory of cosmopolitanism, the other from the doctrine of exclusive nationalism; both of which, as I have sought to show, are morally and prac-

tically impossible. The rejection of these two views will lead us to a third, which I shall suggest is true and sound.

(1) The notion of the "melting-pot" implies that it is possible to cut off our immigrants from their past, and to reduce them to a homogeneous and undifferentiated mass of humanity-in-general, from which they may afterwards be worked up into conformity with a fixed American type. It is as impossible, however, to do this with the souls of men as with their bodies. Humanity-in-general is simply an abstraction. There are no "human beings" in this sense. As was said at the beginning of this chapter, every man and woman is a synthesis of the common elements of humanity, which has been qualified and characterized by the manifold influences of a special psychological atmosphere. We never meet a man or woman who is merely a man or woman. We meet only Chinamen, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Russians, Germans. On the other hand, that American type, into the likeness of which this theory requires us to transfigure our immigrants, is only in the making; it is not yet completely made. Its development, moreover, is by way of a series of modifications, due in large part to its contact with the already highly differentiated new-comers from the Old World. It is a violation of all that we understand by evolution to suppose that this unfinished American can assimilate into his own likeness all who come to our shores, without being himself modified in the process. Neither the New England Puritan, nor the Southern Cavalier, nor yet the hardy pioneer of the West (to specify three of the class-types which we associate with the idea of *the* American) is a fixed and final product, constituting a matrix upon which new arrivals can be

moulded without its being itself affected. The American type, in so far as it is developed, represents the effects of adjustment to an environment (physical and psychical) which is itself changed to some extent by every immigrant who enters it. We must face the fact that this American type will undergo further modification, if immigration is suffered to continue. No doubt the immigrant will be markedly changed: but the absorbing complex will be altered by him, as well as he by it.

(2) The melting-pot ideal is thus impracticable. It is, indeed, nothing but a hasty catchword, snatched up to save the labour of serious thinking. We turn, therefore, to the alternative embraced by those who favour the perpetuation of foreign groups as such, each with a set of ideals, traditions, and social and cultural aspirations, differing from those of every other group, and also from those which have determined the historic development of America. According to this view, the Republic can never become a true inward and spiritual unity. It must remain a bundle of inwardly united but mutually repellent groups, loosely bound together by a tie of common interest totally inferior in strength and quality to the ideal loyalty which fuses each constituent to its past.

Setting aside the question whether this is permanently possible, it cannot be denied that from the national point of view it would be intolerable. No commonwealth can endure the thought of any group of its citizens cherishing another national loyalty, which rivals or transcends that which they accord to the country and the Government with which they have cast in their lot. No other nation would dream of tolerating such a state of things. The very idea of England or Germany suffer-

ing a large mass of its citizens to call themselves Franco-Germans or Russo-English is inconceivable; and we can all readily see why. The reason is sociologically identical with that which led the Jewish lawgivers to deify the soul of their nation, and to represent it as saying, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me." By the accidents of our historic and geographical situation, the indispensable necessity of this inward unity of ideal has hitherto been obscured to us. But the hour is coming, and now is, when we can no longer hide it from ourselves save at our peril. Whatever secondary loyalties and subsidiary patriotisms may for another generation or two survive among us, we have now reached the time when the "gold and purple" of every American's heart must be given unequivocally and unconditionally to this Republic. Our recent exigencies have brought us abruptly to the stark *Entweder-oder* which is rightly insisted upon in every nation except our own. The very life of the Republic depends upon each citizen's deciding whether he is an American or something else. If it be said that the choice is a hard one, the answer is that it has been voluntarily embraced by those who now resent having it forced upon them. The choice of nationality is one of the ineludible finalities of life. The man who hesitates to declare himself betrays the fact that he has in truth already decided,—and decided against America.

He who rejects both the alternative theories sketched in the last few pages, may reasonably be asked to outline his own solution of the problem; and this I shall now very briefly attempt to do.

(3) The advance of civilization takes place by way of contact and cross-fertilization. Isolation is as bad for a

people as for an individual. The self-made nation, like the self-made man, may adore its creator, but humanity at large seldom has reason to approve that creator's wisdom or taste. On the other hand, there have been many instances of advance *per saltum* when two partially developed types of civilization have been brought into relations of contact and interaction. When this happens, it is precisely the points of difference between the two types of culture which produce the reciprocal enrichment. That which is already common to both may blend, but it does not propagate.

The high promise of American life consists in the fact that it has within its control the possibility of a fructifying contact between an unprecedentedly large number of types of civilization, juxtaposed in a close and permanent intimacy such as never has been seen elsewhere. What may be the final result of this unexampled opportunity is unpredictable, because it is contingent upon the operation of factors incalculable in number and complexity. We know beforehand, however, that the efflorescence must needs be of the highest æsthetic and spiritual excellence, if only the situation which constitutes its potentiality be wisely handled. We must arrange that the process of contact between the different types of civilization shall be deliberately controlled and guided. It must not be fortuitous, as in the past. It must be an affair, so to speak, of spiritual eugenics, in which, although the outcome is incapable of exact quantitative prediction, we shall have beforehand an assurance that it will be qualitatively desirable.

Such an ideal demands not the segregation of every type of civilization which is imported, but the careful study of the elements of all of them, as possible con-

tributions to that new and richer type of civilization which is to be evolved in America. The legitimate work of our many nationalistic societies is simply this forward-looking elaboration of their inheritance. These societies have no business to think of themselves as agencies for preserving the cultural achievements of the lands from which their members came, and the loyalty to those lands which such achievements inspire. Their business is to discover the elements of their racial inheritance which, if transplanted into American soil, would be genuine contributions to American civilization, compatible with America's history and ideals, and valuable for their future development. If, for example, there is in any American city a Swedish or British society composed of American citizens, that society must not exist and work for the sake of Sweden or Britain. It would be treason to the Republic for it to do so. It has, however, a perfectly legitimate place and function if it exists and works for the sake of the United States. Let it by all means keep alive what is good in its inheritance; but let it remember always that the things so preserved are offerings on the altar of the God of America.

The national application of this principle would mean, in the first place, that we must cease to subject our immigrants to conditions of urban life which make it impossible for them to preserve the traditions and the arts which they bring with them. In the second place, it will necessitate a new course of study, by which all Americans shall come to know, with some degree of intimacy, the history, traditions and culture of all the groups which are being incorporated into the body politic. This study should not be antiquarian and retrospective; it should be utilitarian and prospective. It demands on all sides an

attitude of modesty, a spirit of receptiveness, and a whole-souled devotion to the common good of the nation which is here being created.

When we go to Europe, we feel the power and the lure of the past. It is our habit to express a certain good-humoured scorn for the European, on account of his submissiveness to history and precedent. We need, however, so to train our imagination that we shall come to feel in this country the claim of the future, as potently as the urge of the past is felt elsewhere. We have the possibility of a civilization which shall be to that of Greece and the Italian Republics what the scientific power of the modern world is to that of antiquity. But whether this possibility shall be realized or not is contingent upon our intelligent handling of our opportunities. There is no inevitability about it. There is no fate, no self-executing law of evolution, which will bring it about independently of our conscious will. If we are capable of taking the long view and co-ordinating the activities of our life to the glorious but far-distant goal, it will be attained. If we are not, the opportunity which now is ours will be dissipated. We shall sink into a slavery to our machinery yet worse than that which we endure to-day, and America will become the most sordid and provincial of all the nations of the earth.

The spiritual leadership necessary for such an enterprise constitutes the opportunity of the schools, the universities and the Churches. In every community there should be international groups, bound by a conscious sense and an explicit declaration of loyalty to America, and bringing together, for the sake of America, the riches of their national patrimonies. The questions for each constituent of such groups are these: What is there

in the culture I have inherited which could with advantage to America be transplanted here? What of my best can I offer to the growing civilization of the land to which I have sworn allegiance? What unique thing has my old country produced which will serve for the enrichment of mankind in general, and specifically of my new country?

It is easy to see how vast a programme of profitable work is thus laid open to the national and international groups that already exist in this country, and to others which could be founded to carry it out. In its developed form, the plan would entail courses of lectures and the preparation of text-books for use in schools and colleges. The study of the subject in our educational institutions might be undertaken either as a new item in the curriculum, or by a remodelling of the courses in history and literature. Every preacher could find in it inexhaustible material for his sermons. It would provide a legitimate channel for those secondary loyalties and subsidiary patriotisms of which I have spoken. It would change these from being, what they too often are to-day, a menace to the unity and progress of America, into the most potent means for the attainment of these ends.

No less a motive, however, than the religious conception of our nation's destiny can be adequate to the fulfilment of its spiritual promise. The names of Athens and Jerusalem are, in Emerson's phrase, "ploughed into the history of the world," because their citizens consecrated themselves to Athens and Jerusalem as to their gods. Sir John Seeley has well remarked that it would sound incongruous for us to give in our public worship the same place to our own nations and cities as the Jews

gave to theirs.[1] It would indeed seem like a bad joke for me to suggest to my own fellow-citizens that in their churches they should sing, "Oh, pray for the peace of Chicago. They shall prosper that love thee . . . God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." Yet until its citizens do thus think and feel towards Chicago, Chicago cannot begin to be worthy of such veneration. Until America and her destiny mean to us what the laws of Athens meant to Socrates, and what the mission of Israel meant to the Hebrew prophets, we cannot hope either for a truly exalted patriotism or for a great outburst of national genius in art; since only this idealizing enthusiasm can possibly quicken such an outburst.

Genius fructifies only in the directions in which the national attention is canalized. That is why we are to-day building magnificent railway-stations, but no cathedrals, except imitations of European models; luxurious private dwellings (which latterly have manifested an immense improvement in taste), but no national theatres. That is why our creative energy, which ought to be producing literature and philosophy of more than Elizabethan splendour and more than Athenian profundity, is being drawn off into commercial enterprise. We are giving our life to acquiring the means of purchasing from Europe artistic satisfactions which are not congruous with the special inspirations of our own national genius.

This phase, of course, is transitional, and the situation is not desperate. We have our own great prophets and poets. We are even beginning to discover them. Nor do I wish in the least to disparage the spirit which has created the Panama Canal, and which expresses itself

[1] *Natural Religion*, Pt. ii, chap. iv ("Natural Religion and the State.")

in such novel combinations of utility and magnificence as the two great railway terminals of New York City, the Union Station at Washington, and the Woolworth Building,—one of the wonders of the world in its beauty, as well as in the engineering science it expresses. But we must also yoke this mighty energy and inventiveness to the work of consciously upbuilding our civilization on its æsthetic, literary, political and religious sides.

CONCLUSION

THE HOPE OF SPIRITUAL UNIFICATION

My purpose throughout this book has been to draw attention to elements of religion which are verifiable by experience, and to indicate the enormous task, and the consequent golden opportunity, which lie before the Churches. In conclusion, I would urge that if the Churches should concentrate their attention upon these verifiable elements, they would not only render a service of unprecedented usefulness to mankind, but they would also, without external coercion and without surrendering any vital principle, be insensibly led on to a unity of purpose and conviction in the light of which their sectarian differences would sink into utter insignificance. The mediæval Church was right in the high valuation it placed upon unanimity of spiritual conviction. It was wrong in thinking that such unity could be brought about by coercion and by the suppression of liberty of thought and discussion. Such a course can produce only a maimed intelligence or a hypocritical conformity. Out of the struggle between the authoritarian principle and the demand for freedom has sprung the compromise called toleration. We now have a world which is riven to shards on the spiritual side, and has almost ceased to regard unity of inward conviction and inspiration as possible, or even as desirable.

The ultimate reason for this state of things is that in the life of to-day there is no general sense of sovereign

and unconditional imperatives, to which all personal and class interests ought to be subordinated. Christianity, indeed, embodies such an imperative; but the Churches have lost their power to teach it. Their own apostasy—their own repeated sacrifices of principle to interest—have enervated them. When they do proclaim the doctrine that the gaining of the whole world ought to be counted as nothing in comparison with the interests of the soul, their message falls upon ears rendered scornful and incredulous by the memory of the way in which the Church has repeatedly denied in practice the doctrine which its lips affirm. Slowly the reduction and the denudation of the claim of duty upon men has gone on, until for most to-day the very word means no more than self-interest. In every department of life we see what Newman called "the wild living intellect of man," yoked to the steeds of passion and self-interest instead of to high self-obliterating loyalties, and heading for the abyss of animalism and sensuality. To-day no law is obeyed except for gain. Money and power are desired not as means of larger service and usefulness, but for the sake of "the dark idolatry of self." Marriage is reduced to a mere convenience, to be tolerated or abandoned at whim. Even such self-restraint as is practised, is endured only for the sake of the future capacity for enjoyment which it promises to secure. Self-advertisement, self-worship, self-enrichment—these three alone animate the conduct of multitudes.

No nation can be great, no nation can endure, whose people run after the false gods of self and class. We must regain for America the high olden loyalty of her children, else her glorious story will be "gathered like a scroll within the tomb." Our noble and puissant nation must

be released from the Comus-spell that has bemused her, and freed from her idolatry of pelf and luxury. She must become aware of herself as entrusted with a divine mission to all humanity, and all her children must learn to care far less for personal gain, or even for the immediate advantage of their class, than for the abiding welfare of the nation, whose glory is her power of universal service.

Now, it is obvious that such a loyalty as is needed can be nothing less than a religion. It may not bear the Christian name; it cannot be expressed solely in Christian phraseology. But it must be such a devotion as men have never rendered save to their gods, and such as cannot be inspired by any motive short of what is counted ultimately sacred and inviolable. This can only be engendered by blending the ideal inspirations of all religious bodies, and by a re-interpretation of religion in such language as shall show its identity with the highest patriotism and its vital relation to the enduring good of men and nations in the life that now is. Every Christian Church, if it be wise, can express its message in such terms. If it cannot, then it is in so far not truly Christian; and its inability to do so will involve and justify its own speedy supersession.

But what I am contending for is an interest more supreme and transcendent than the maintenance of Christianity in its outward form. No true inheritor of the spirit of Christ would hesitate for a moment to say: Let the name of Christ perish from the memory of men, if only so is it possible for his spirit to be lifted into sovereignty over their hearts and wills. It sometimes happens in the spiritual life, though not in outward nature, that that which is sown cannot be quickened except it die; and it may be that the only condition

upon which the spirit of Jesus can rise into newness of life as an impelling force in future civilization, is that outward homage to him shall disappear. I do not suggest that this is certain or even likely to happen; my point is that it were better so than that his name should continue to be outwardly reverenced, while that for which he lived and died is in practice trodden under foot.

Short, however, of such a complete disappearance of the outward form of historic Christianity, it is certain that the existing Churches must make radical changes of policy and doctrine if they are to survive. The current apologetic of orthodoxy is worse than futile as addressed to a generation trained in critical philosophy and in the methods and the rigorous standards of exactitude characteristic of modern science. The Church to-day stands face to face with the choice between its letter and its life. It can preserve the outward forms of traditional orthodoxy only at the cost of the stifling of that spirit by which, and for the sake of which, they were originally created. Christianity now stands where Judaism stood at the beginning of the Christian era. It must either receive and blend with its historic elements the new spiritual life that is surging through the world, or it must suffer a tragic but not unmerited supersession. More than half of America is to-day without a religion. Without a religion it cannot live, nor can it live with the religion of the past. The experience of ages justifies the conviction that the old faith cannot again prevail, except by an adaptation more radical and far-reaching than any it has hitherto undergone. The question, then, for the Churches is whether they value the letter more than the spirit, and the past more than that future, the creation of which is entrusted to men now living.

Mere toleration of differences in religion is as beggarly and unsatisfactory a compromise as it would be in our knowledge of the external world. Our feeling in regard to science is that universal and objective truth is to be found; and so long as there is difference of belief we are unsatisfied. Now, no man who is convinced of the universal validity of the principles of reason can doubt that incontrovertible truth in the sphere of religion, whatever it may prove to be, is at least attainable. If we have not reached it, this is because our methods of inquiry have not been right, or have not been adequately developed. We have adhered to the pre-scientific methods of antiquity in the search for ultimate religious truth, and the results have inevitably proved discouraging; so much so that we have even surrendered the ideal. We have grown so accustomed to mere individualistic toleration of differences of view with regard to God and fate that we have come not merely to acquiesce in perpetual diversity of conviction as unavoidable, but almost to count it good. The proposer, therefore, of a plan which aims, among other things, at ending it, must say at least a word in explanation of his desire to do so.

I would accordingly remind the reader that it is not long since men were at sixes and sevens over many of the questions of physical science. Not only did unity of belief in these matters appear impossible, but it was not even felt to be necessary. To-day, however, we can see that the immense enterprises—in engineering, in mining, in the building up of systems for the transportation of men and commodities, in medicine and surgery, in the improvement and safeguarding of the public health, and in a thousand other matters of vital importance—which have transformed the world within the memory of men

still living, could never have even begun to be possible had not the old diversity of belief in regard to the make of the physical world been driven out and replaced by approximate unity. The world to-day is suffering spiritually by reason of the diversity of religious beliefs even more than it formerly suffered materially through the lack of unanimity in the understanding of physical facts.

It is, moreover, impossible for thoughtful men to rest satisfied with a state of affairs which inevitably leaves men's moral and spiritual convictions at the stage of mere *beliefs*. Religion will not rise to its full power until experience has given place to experiment, and until, wherever possible, conscientious convictions are transformed into demonstrated truths.

It is not possible at present to forecast the immense achievements in the regeneration of human nature, in the wedding of mighty genius to forms of unpredictable efficiency and beauty, which will ensue when our command over the forces that generate character is as complete as our present control over the resources of the external world. The anticipation, however, of such an era of man's godlike self-fulfilment, is justified by every analogy of experience. No man in Francis Bacon's day could have foreseen the effect of his proposals to cultivate natural knowledge as a means for the relief of man's estate; and, to many, his visions of the triumphs to be won by his method doubtless seemed baseless and fantastic. The hope of the world in religion must also remain vague. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. But it is as rational to anticipate a surpassing glory to result from spiritual unification as it would be foolish to attempt to delineate that glory in detail before the hour of its manifestation shall arrive.

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